

the routledge anthology  
of renaissance drama  
edited by simon barker  
and hilary hinds

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# The Routledge Anthology of Renaissance Drama

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Ten non-Shakespearean Renaissance plays and a masque have been brought together for the first time in what is a major text for students of English drama of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The Renaissance saw a dramatic explosion of such force that, four hundred years later, its plays are still amongst the most frequently performed and studied we have. This anthology offers a full introduction to Renaissance theatre in its historical and political context, along with newly edited and comprehensively annotated texts of the following plays:

*The Spanish Tragedy* (Thomas Kyd)  
*Arden of Faversham* (Anon.)  
*Edward II* (Christopher Marlowe)  
*A Woman Killed with Kindness* (Thomas Heywood)  
*The Tragedy of Mariam* (Elizabeth Cary)  
*The Masque of Blackness* (Ben Jonson)  
*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Francis Beaumont)  
*Epicœne, or the Silent Woman* (Ben Jonson)  
*The Roaring Girl* (Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker)  
*The Changeling* (Thomas Middleton and William Rowley)  
*'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (John Ford)

Each play is prefaced by an introductory headnote discussing the thematic focus of the play and its textual history, and is cross-referenced to other plays of the period that relate thematically and generically.

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**Hilary Hinds** is Lecturer in English at the University of Lancaster. Her research and teaching focus principally on seventeenth-century literature, and in particular on women's writing from the radical sects.



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*Edited by Simon Barker and Hilary Hinds*

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Simon Barker and Hilary Hinds





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# Guide to the Anthology

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This collection is intended to make accessible a number of important non-Shakespearean Renaissance plays. Priority has been given to those plays not currently available in affordable editions. To this end, widely republished plays by playwrights such as Marlowe and Jonson (such as *Dr Faustus*, *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*) have been excluded in favour of their less readily available work (*Edward II*, *The Masque of Blackness* and *Epicoene*) and in favour of the work of dramatists such as Heywood, Middleton and Beaumont.

Our hope is that this anthology will stimulate readers' interest in this period of intense cultural and social change. To facilitate further reading and research in the drama of this period and in the critical debates that this drama has generated, a broad range of contextualising materials has been included.

The following plan outlines the nature and scope of these materials, and offers an indication of the composition of the anthology as a whole.

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## Introductory material

Introduction	The introduction situates the plays and theatres of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in their social and cultural context, discussing <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• pre-Renaissance theatre</li><li>• the different kinds of playhouses</li><li>• the plays that were performed in them</li><li>• contemporary social, economic and political institutions, and the plays' engagement with these.</li></ul>
Further reading	Comprehensive bibliography of titles relating to topics and issues raised in the introduction.
Chronology	Timeline setting the plays in chronological relation to other significant historical and cultural events.

## The plays

Headnotes	Each play is prefaced with its own introductory headnote, discussing the thematic focus of the play and its textual history.
Further reading	Each headnote is followed by a list of other editions of the play and selected criticism relating to it.
Works of related interest	Each play included in this anthology is cross-referenced to other plays of the period that relate generically and/or thematically.
The plays	The text of each play has been fully edited and footnoted, and the spelling has been modernised.

## Website

For a selection of related Renaissance material that complements and extends this collection, visit *The Routledge Anthology of Renaissance Drama* website at [www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415187346](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415187346)

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# Introduction

## ‘The fashion of play-making’: theatre, drama and society in early modern England

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Between the 1560s and the 1630s, London witnessed the rise (and sometimes demise) of some fifteen theatres. As well as these purpose-built theatres, a number of pre-existing halls and inns were converted for the public staging of plays and these existed alongside other places of recreation such as bull- and bear-baiting arenas, cock-fighting pits and inns in whose courtyards plays were occasionally performed. That London could sustain this number of places of public entertainment might, at first, seem unremarkable: we are used, after all, to thinking of London as a city of some seven million people with many hundreds of such places. The figures begin to take on a different meaning, however, when we recall that in 1600 the population of London was around 200,000 which, by our standards, is very small. Nonetheless, public or ‘amphitheatre’ theatres such as the Globe held around 3,000 people and, by 1609, were staging plays every day of the week. These figures illustrate the popularity of the theatre at this time and indicate something of the alacrity with which theatrical entrepreneurs set about meeting the increasing demand for stage plays. By around 1604, there was a playhouse of some kind within two miles of nearly every Londoner, and playgoing enjoyed such popularity that traffic jams often blocked the streets around the theatres. Indeed, a petition of 1619 complained about the problems this caused:

There is daylie such resort of people, and such multitudes of Coaches (whereof many are Hackney Coaches, bringinge people of all sortes) that sometymes all our streetes cannott containe them . . . And the inhabitantes there cannott come to their howses, nor bringe in their necessary provisions of beere, wood, coale or haye, nor the Tradesmen or shopkeepers utter their wares, nor the passenger goe to the common water staires without danger of their lives and lymmes.

(Bentley 1941–68, vol. 1: 4–5)

The exasperation of the writer on behalf of those living and working in the vicinity of the theatres is clear: the crush of theatre-goers was impeding not only people’s access to their houses and to the river (one of the main city thoroughfares) but also interfering with people’s

livelihoods by hindering trade in the neighbourhood. The account is important too, however, for the way it indicates that playgoing was widespread amongst ‘people of all sortes’, *all* ranks of society – not only the apprentices who paid a penny to stand in the pit at the public theatres or the law students from the Inns of Court, but also those Londoners wealthy enough to own their own coaches.

Such detailed accounts combine with the statistics about theatre-building to demonstrate the extraordinary popularity of playgoing at the end of the sixteenth century and in the early decades of the seventeenth century. There was indeed a ‘fashion of play-making’, as Thomas Middleton put it in his preface to *The Roaring Girl* (1611). Although various forms of theatrical entertainment, usually involving religious celebration or instruction, had been important features of the cultural landscape in Europe and beyond for centuries, the rapid expansion of London’s purpose-built commercial theatres during the Renaissance was an entirely new phenomenon. The question of how we can account for this expansion continues to fascinate students of this period. We cannot hope fully to account for these changes in a short introduction, but we do wish to point to some of the issues which are debated, often fiercely, to do with the social, economic, political and cultural circumstances which combined to precipitate this expansion in theatrical production, and the ways in which these circumstances are manifested in the plays themselves. Perhaps the best way to begin to address these questions is to return to the location of these theatres: London itself. What changes had taken place in the capital city that enabled it to produce and sustain so many new theatres and new plays over a period of some fifty years?

### City, country, commerce and class

By the end of the sixteenth century, London had become a city in rapid transition, experiencing transformations that were for the most part the outcome of unprecedented and accelerating economic change. Although most people continued to live and work in agricultural communities, towns and cities were nonetheless expanding rapidly and becoming increasingly powerful. This expansion was the result of

## INTRODUCTION

a number of factors: the development of early forms of manufacturing and trade, an increase in the overall population of the country (doubling from 2.5 million in the 1520s to around 5 million in 1600), and the continuing process of the enclosure of land into larger, privately owned, units of production. Philip Stubbes, writing in *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), explained that:

They take in, and inclose commons, moores, heaths, and other common pastures, wher out the poore commonalitie were wont to have all their forage and feeding for their cattell, & (which is more) corne for them selves to lyve uppon . . . For these inclosures be the causes, why rich men, eat up poore men, as beasts do eat grass.

(Stubbes 1973: n.p.)

Historians debate the extent and effect of this process during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558–1603) but most note the considerable unrest such dispossession caused, especially in times of poor harvest and the accompanying migration to the towns. Early industrial activity, often benefiting from the skills of Protestant immigrants from The Netherlands and France, also drew people from the countryside to the towns in search of wages and the perceived benefits of urban life. The population of London itself was most affected and the city grew to be one of the largest in Europe. The 200,000 people who lived in London in 1600 represented a doubling of the city's population since 1580, and it was to double again, to 400,000, by 1650.

One effect of this increase was to create a large audience for the expanding network of theatres. Many of the people who attended these theatres had a memory of the traditions and cycles of activity in the countryside, as well as a new consciousness of the rigours and, indeed, the dangers of urban life. Many Londoners retained a connection with the countryside through the city's agricultural markets, but London was also rapidly becoming the focus for a new kind of commercial activity which had an increasingly international dimension. For more people than ever before, there emerged an awareness of 'the nation' in relation to the rest of Europe, as well as to the expanding world itself, as news circulated of the settlements made in the territories of the 'new worlds' beyond Europe. The period of history during which the plays in this volume were written was one of increasing exploration and the first tentative 'planting' (of people) overseas. England's only real colony (and most successful plantation of Protestantism) was Ireland. However, whatever the practical successes and failures of these activities, the impulse towards the settlement of overseas territories can be glimpsed surprisingly early in the sixteenth century.

Trade links to the east of Europe (and particularly

with Turkey through the Levant Company) opened up possibilities of further links as far as India and China. Some of this business involved the establishment of small groups of traders abroad. The lands across the Atlantic to the west, however, gave rise to the possibility of an entirely different form of activity. The idea arose in the 1560s that a 'stabling place' could be set up in North America through which local raw materials could be exchanged for English cloth. Indeed, in 1582 Humphrey Gilbert declared English sovereignty over Newfoundland but the project failed, as did the idea of a 'New Albion' in what is now California and early plantations in Virginia during 1584 and 1587. It was not until the 1620s that more successful settlements were established, yet this earlier expansion, together with associated tensions in international affairs, particularly with Spain, had made an enlarged concept of the world available for a great number of people. However, there were insecurities about the development of a non-agrarian structure of employment and in the new awareness of the world which it had helped to deliver, and these tensions are revealed in the dramatic writing of the period.

Whilst many of these plays, such as *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), are located in the claustrophobic settings of English (or foreign) country estates, an increasing number, such as *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609) and *The Roaring Girl*, established the importance of towns and cities as places recognisable as images of the structure and pattern of everyday life for the theatre audience. Even where town life was represented in European settings (*The Changeling* (1622) is set in Spain, for example, and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633) in Italy), there would have been a keen sense of identification for London audiences intrigued by the potential for comparison between these imagined overseas locations and their own expanding city. Moreover, a strong element throughout the drama of the seventeenth century is the perceived clash between the ways of the country and the ways of the town. Rural life was idealised for its purity and simplicity, ridiculed and attacked for its lack of sophistication, or both: in *Epicoene*, for instance, Truewit signals the impossibility of finding a chaste wife in the city by suggesting that such a creature existed only in some distant – and undesirable – rural past:

If you had lived in King Etheldred's time, sir, or Edward the Confessor's, you might, perhaps, have found in some cold country hamlet, then, a dull frosty wench would have been contented with one man; now they will as soon be pleased with one leg or one eye.

(II.ii.39–44)

In *The Roaring Girl*, the countryside figures, on the one hand, as a place for the staging of illicit sexual

encounters (at Ware, Hoxton or Brentford, villages outside of, but accessible from, London), or, on the other hand, as a place of impoverishment and dearth (as signalled by the names of Lord Noland and Laxton). In all of these instances the countryside is attributed its meanings only through reference to, and in order to define, its perceived opposite: the city.

The material conditions of city life are a key element in many of these plays. The rich diversity of London's population is represented, together with the opportunities and pitfalls of the new economic order. Although rural life had been, and continued to be, dependent upon the uncertainties of the harvest (and deeply affected over the centuries by disease, high mortality rates and migration), it was also insular and, for the most part, characterised by the stability and continuity of its population. Life in the towns was less predictable, since it depended upon a more complex social and economic structure and a more mobile population. The varying fortunes of trade led to uneven levels of employment, whether in work directly related to enterprise or in the associated positions of servants and those involved in the supply trades. 'Masterless' people, both victims of changing rural economies and ex-soldiers (such as Trapdoor and Tearcat in *The Roaring Girl*), threatened both country and city, and the new concentration of large numbers of people in urban areas helped spread the recurrent bouts of plague, the extent and effect of which can be fairly accurately traced by, amongst other things, the occasions when they forced the closure of the theatres.

Day-to-day life in the city was characterised by high levels of both casual and surprisingly 'organised' crime in a society which lacked anything like a modern police force; indeed, the attention given to 'thieves' cant', the specialist language of criminals and vagrants, in *The Roaring Girl* testifies to the highly developed structures of communication and organisation within this social grouping. Moreover, justice was itself a form of theatre, in the sense that it often resulted in spectacular displays of power by the authorities as a means of deterrence. Whilst the agents of government might initially confine and torture their enemies in the hidden chambers of the Tower of London, it was also common for examples to be made of both political opponents and ordinary criminals in the public areas of the city, with branding, mutilations and hangings being conducted for all to see. In this most unequal of societies, it was not unusual to see women and men publicly abused and chastised through a number of popular rituals and punishments for their lack of conformity to the 'laws' of gender and sexual conduct which governed their lives. This was a society in which the power of the state and the law was demonstrated and enacted precisely through its public 'performance'. Far from the theatre and the law occupying separate spheres of entertainment and social

regulation, then, the plays engaged fundamentally with issues of power and authority, just as the judiciary and the state relied on the power of spectacle.

The plays' engagement with such issues involved a recognition that power and authority were distributed differentially through society, and that the social hierarchies that had previously determined social status and power were undergoing a process of transformation. This evolution of the early modern system of social rank or degree was inextricably bound up with the changing pattern of economic development. The largely rural medieval social formation had for centuries held relatively few opportunities for social advancement, the land-controlling aristocracy presiding over a hierarchy of gentry and peasantry that was firmly linked to their roles within the countryside and mediated through the dual institutions of local feudal justice and the church. However, by the late sixteenth century, this was giving way to a more diverse and rather more fluid system of social hierarchy, where a man's degree depended on a combination of his wealth, power and status, and a woman's usually depended on that of her father or husband. Whilst the social hierarchy was still characterised by the nobility and land-owning gentry at the top, the professions (such as the church, the law, medicine and the army) and major trades (based on wholesaling and retailing) complicated the old structures of rural stratification in that the growing wealth and power of increasingly urban-based groups began to effect a change in their status. These urban elites tended to be drawn from the middling gentry and continued to act in their own interests; however, they also increasingly came to control positions of authority in the towns and cities, on councils and in courts of aldermen, or in guild companies (as demonstrated in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*). Below them in the hierarchy came the rural yeomen, who acted as the gentry's 'agents' by servicing juries, acting as constables and administering the system of poor relief. In descending order of degree, they were followed by craftsmen, tradesmen and copyholders (tenant farmers), then apprentices and servants (drawn from a number of social groups and therefore most likely to change their position within the social hierarchy) and, finally, husbandmen (who farmed their own smallholdings), cottagers (who supplemented their income with paid labour), labourers and vagrants. These distinctions varied somewhat from locality to locality, but within this general system of social inequality, however, there was constant movement, in that some farm labourers would become yeomen, some urban apprentices would become masters, and so on. The system of fine gradations and stratification operated in as thoroughgoing a way at the lower end of the hierarchy as it did at the higher. However, whilst capable of ranking groups and occupations into a complex and finely tuned system of stratification,

contemporaries also increasingly grouped these many positions into three broad clusters: ‘gentlemen’, ‘the middling sort of people’ and ‘the poor’ – a tripartite system closer to the urban-based class system which was to supersede it in the eighteenth century.

The plays’ determined preoccupation with matters of social rank is evidence both of the evolution of the social structure, and of the way that this produced a tension between the emerging classes and the old aristocracy which, although it had fought wars within its own ranks, had never conceded its own ‘divinely sanctioned’ power over the majority of the population. Much of the drama of the period can be seen as fairly even-handedly implying criticism of the beliefs of both the older aristocratic layer of society and the newly-emerging and increasingly influential ‘middling sort’. *Epicoene*, for example, is relentless in its excoriation of fashionable and rootless urbanites as represented by Morose, the collegiate ladies, the ersatz Sir John Daw (whose learning is indiscriminate and cavalier, and who ‘buys titles’), the Otters, and even the putative ‘heroes’, the three gallants. Family longevity and continuity, however, is no guarantee of wisdom or good order, as La Foole demonstrates. His family, the La Fooles of London, are the source of all the La Fooles of the land: ‘They all come out of our house, the La Fooles o’ the north, the La Fooles of the west, the La Fooles of the east and south – we are as ancient a family as any is in Europe’ (I.iv.37–40). Even in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, which is a much less acerbic comedy than *Epicoene*, a chivalric past is invoked only to be parodied and undercut by a sense of the lack of relevance of such ideals and practices in the new urban context. Perhaps these comedies are exceptional in their unwillingness to identify ‘the old order’ as more desirable and harmonious than the new. Much of the drama at this time would probably have been viewed as conservatively and nostalgically favouring this system of patronage and stability, seen as increasingly vulnerable and unstable.

### Early modern theatre: origins, locations and dramatic forms

By the 1560s, London, with its rapidly expanding population, its new forms of trade and commerce, and its complex and diverse social composition, was on the brink of a new era of theatre-building and play-performing. The theatres in which the plays were first performed owed their development not only to a remarkable confluence of dramatic tradition, intellectual energy and commercial enterprise, but also to the developments in building skills which allowed structures to be designed specifically for theatrical entertainment. This is not to say, however, that popular dramatic forms and performances were themselves new. On the

contrary, the medieval period had been rich in varied forms of drama, much of it closely bound up with the folk traditions of an agrarian society. It is thought, for example, that the popularity of plays dealing with Christian notions of death and resurrection owed something to pre-Christian traditions celebrating the cycle of the changing seasons. Indeed, many of the festivals, particularly Christmas and Easter with their entertainments and rituals, can be seen as having been grafted on to pre-existing pagan celebrations, and the legacy of these combined traditions can be found in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

More specifically, it was the church which encouraged the more formal kinds of dramatic tradition from which the early modern theatre descended. The Mystery plays, which were organised in the towns by the guilds of professional artisans, had their origins in dramatic representations of episodes from the Bible which had first been acted in the larger Catholic places of worship as far back as the ninth century. In the years leading up to (and perhaps overlapping with) the establishment of the first public theatres in London, these productions annually retold those key Christian stories which were considered the literal history of human existence. Although central figures (Adam, Noah and Christ) were often played by professional actors, the main cast was drawn from amongst local people, and the form allowed topical references, local customs and even limited social critique to combine with the reinforcement of the truth of Christian teaching.

Medieval Morality plays such as *Mankind* (1464–71) and *Everyman* (c. 1520) had, perhaps, more forceful messages to convey, with their severe warnings against sin and the corruption of the soul. These plays, which toured around towns and villages, dramatised the various temptations to which ‘man’ was open. Typically a central human figure was visited by emblematic figures representing various sins or moral dilemmas, a tradition handed on to the Renaissance theatre and easily seen in plays such as Christopher Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus* (c. 1589) or Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1606). In the absence of buildings specifically designed for the theatre, these early plays were staged in market squares, the courtyards of inns and the banqueting halls of the larger mansions (as in the case of the travelling players who act ‘The Mousetrap’ in *Hamlet* (1600)). Despite the gravity of their spiritual messages, these were also entertainments, and their mixing of comedy with theology is a tradition that perhaps explains the mixing of genres in the plays of the Elizabethan and early Stuart period. Some of the most compelling figures in the plays in this volume happen to be some of the most morally corrupt (Salome in *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1604), De Flores in *The Changeling*, or Giovanni in *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*), and many of the figures of high comedy, such as Moll

Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl*, are the most philosophically gifted and eloquent.

The poets who turned to the theatre in the period immediately before Shakespeare were well aware of these older traditions and incorporated them into their new work. They were also attuned to the long-standing forms of entertainment at court (where the masque was cultivated) and to such European forms of street entertainment as the *commedia dell'arte* and the earliest forms of Italian opera. The London of the second half of the sixteenth century was fast becoming a cosmopolitan society visited by groups of travelling actors from abroad. In addition, there was an interest in classical forms of theatre, an interest which adds to the sense of the period as the Renaissance, a revaluation of classical culture. A notion of the ideal structure and form of a play was derived from a knowledge of the work of the Greek writer Aristotle (384–322 BC). His early ‘criticism’ was highly influential in the work of many of the playwrights, his theory of dramatic unity, explained in *The Poetics*, being perhaps most evident in the plays of Ben Jonson. Similarly, the plays of the Roman writer Seneca (4 BC–AD 64) interested contemporary students at Oxford and Cambridge and inspired much early modern tragedy, particularly after the publication of Thomas Newton’s *Seneca, His Tenne Tragedies Translated into English* in 1581. Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* (1585) is an early example of such ‘Senecan’ tragedy, whilst Elizabeth Cary’s *The Tragedy of Mariam*, a later play, is ‘Senecan’ not only in its interest in revenge, but also because it was a ‘closet’ drama, like Seneca’s plays, probably written to be read rather than to be performed on stage.

The evolution of these various influences into the dramatic genres represented in this volume depended, however, upon the practical development of drama into a commercial institution, housed in the new, purpose-built theatres. Until this point, when plays had been performed in halls, market places, inn yards or baiting arenas, payment for the actors had come from diverse sources, either from the host who had invited them to play, or, in cases where performance was in a market place, from passing a hat round after the play. With the new playhouses, the financial relationship between players and audiences changed:

By enclosing the plays inside a special building players made the customers who paid to see what was on offer more selective, and no doubt more demanding. Only those who paid got in. They got in for the exclusive purpose of seeing a play, and they handed their money over to the impresarios and players whose sole interest was in satisfying their demand for entertainment. Moreover a single fixed venue needed a much larger turnover of plays than was needed when the players were on their travels

from one town to another. So the new London playhouses became a massive stimulus to the production of new plays.

(Gurr 1996: 10–11)

The earliest of these new theatres was the Red Lion, built by John Brayne in 1567 in Whitechapel. This was replaced in 1576 when James Burbage (Brayne’s brother-in-law and business partner) constructed a building known simply as ‘The Theatre’ at Shoreditch, then to the north-east of London proper; in the following year, and very near to the Theatre, the Curtain was built. The rapid proliferation of large public theatres is evidence of Londoners’ demand for all manner of entertainment. After the building of the Curtain, the favoured location for the erection of public theatres became Southwark, on the south bank of the River Thames, and thus safely outside the jurisdiction of the city authorities who sought, where possible, to suppress the performance of plays. These theatres were located near a similarly expanding array of bear and bull pits, brothels, cockfighting arenas, and other forms of public entertainment which contemporary writers and, in particular, Puritan critics, saw as equally dubious and degrading. Indeed, something like a tradition became established of invective against the theatre, ranging from John Rainold’s lectures at Oxford in the reign of Henry VIII to William Prynne’s scathing critiques of the 1630s. Stephen Gosson, in his *The School of Abuse*, a pamphlet of 1579, grouped players together with poets and ‘pipers’ as part of a general moral malaise:

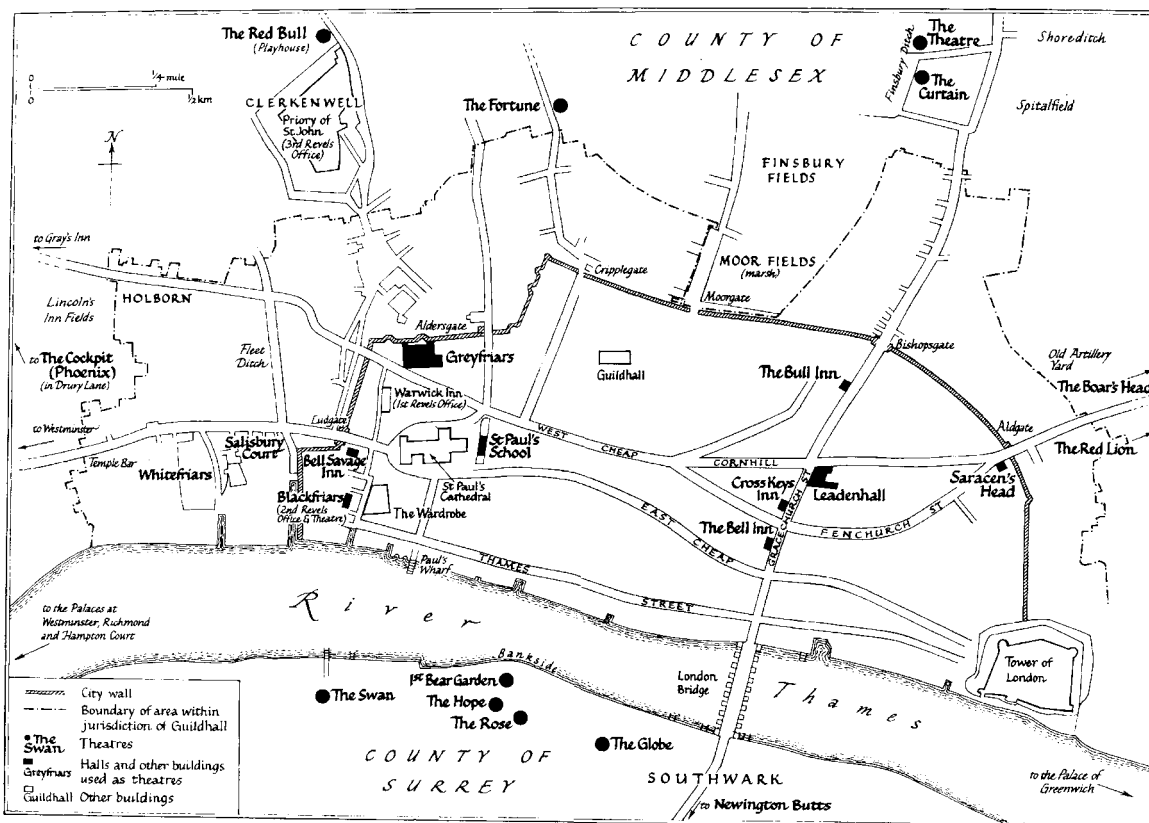
Let us but shut uppe our eares to poets, pipers and players; pull our feete back from resort to theaters, and turne away our eyes from beholding of vanitie, the greatest storme of abuse will bee overblowne, and a faire path troden to amendment of life: were not we so foolish to taste every drugge and buy every trifle, players woulde shut in their shops, and carry their trash to some other country.

(Gosson 1841: 34)

Despite such attacks, theatres and other places of public entertainment proliferated. Southwark’s Rose theatre, an archaeological trace of which remains today, was built in 1587, followed by the Swan in 1595 and, most famously, the Globe, which opened in 1599. The Globe was situated a few hundred metres further away from the river than the present replica building, and was said to have been built from the timbers of Burbage’s Shoreditch theatre, demolished in 1598. The Globe was itself rebuilt in 1614 after a fire the previous year. Another Southwark theatre was the Hope (1614), also much used for bear-baiting. The Fortune (1600), the Boar’s Head (1601) and the Red Bull (1604) were to the north of the Thames, but again outside of the



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Locations of London's principal theatres, c. 1560-1642

jurisdiction of the London authorities (see map). These theatres attracted large audiences of up to 3,000 people, who were charged a small fee to attend the afternoon performances. Their designation as 'public' theatres results from their capacity, their cheapness and the fact that their clientele was drawn from diverse areas of society. These are also sometimes known as 'amphitheatre' playhouses, however, which indicates something of these buildings' physical properties. Modelled on the inn yard or animal-baiting arena, these theatres were usually polygonal and were partially open to the sky (only the stage and the galleries were covered), and their stages projected into the open central 'pit' or courtyard. Thomas Platter, a German visitor to London in 1599, described the seating arrangements and the atmosphere of the London theatres that he visited:

Thus daily at two in the afternoon, London has two, sometimes three plays running in different places, competing with each other, and those which play best obtain most spectators. The playhouses are so constructed that they play on a raised platform, so that everyone has a good view. There are different

galleries and places, however, where the seating is better and more comfortable and therefore more expensive. For whoever cares to stand below only pays one English penny, but if he wishes to sit he enters by another door, and pays another penny, while if he desires to sit in the most comfortable seats which are cushioned, where he not only sees everything well, but can also be seen, then he pays yet another English penny at another door. And during the performance food and drink are carried round the audience, so that for what one cares to pay one may also have refreshment. The actors are most expensively and elaborately costumed; for it is the English usage for eminent lords or Knights at their decease to bequeath and leave almost the best of their clothes to their serving men, which it is unseemly for the latter to wear, so they offer them then for sale for a small sum to the actors.

(Platter 1937: 166-7)

Plays written for these public playhouses were shaped by their writers' awareness of the social composition of their audiences as well as the physical characteristics of the buildings in which the plays would be acted. One of

the most interesting features of the plays is the way that they frequently draw attention to the fact that they are, indeed, plays. There is none of the aspiration to realism found in many modern forms of drama, although there is an often repeated idea that 'real' life is itself rather like a play, in which we take roles and act out parts. , it is possible to learn much from the lines written for the early modern actor about the emblematic environment in which he worked. The stage itself had a symbolic role. Hell was located below the platform (through a trap door) and heaven was above it, signified by a painted ceiling of stars. Actors would address an audience in full acknowledgement of its presence as part of the 'event'; a few actors could easily be understood to represent a crowd, or even an army; boy actors could be understood to represent women (since there were no professional women actors) and a sense of place or time was indicated in the dialogue at the beginning of a new scene (as there was no scenery or artificial lighting), and a gesture would convey a message understood across the audience to its furthest members. This is not to say that this was a theatre lacking in subtlety; the actors worked their audiences' imaginations to the full. Nor was it a spartan theatre; what the public theatres lacked in the modern sense of 'scenery', they gained not only through the committed involvement of their audiences in the entertainment, but also by the employment of elaborate costume, ingenious props and music.

Theatre clearly demanded then, as now, extremely high levels of organisation. The theatres were profit-making commercial concerns, and the owners, playwrights and companies of actors responded to the demands of their business with rigorous professionalism. Surviving documents from the time, and in particular the diary of the theatre-owner Philip Henslowe, reveal the intricate nature of the finances involved in running a theatre. Money was to be made in the theatres despite the fact that they were constantly under attack from the civic authorities (who thought of actors as little more than vagabonds) and subject to regular closure as a result of recurrent outbreaks of plague. Partly as a result of this precarious existence, acting companies sought patronage from the monarchs and aristocracy of the time, and this is reflected in the titles they assumed, such as the 'King's Men' or 'Queen Anne's Men'. This patronage led the companies to perform at court, which meant that if a play was performed in a public theatre and again before the queen or king, its ultimate audience encompassed the full range of society.

During the seventeenth century the large public theatres began to lose ground to the smaller and more intimate 'private' theatres. The earliest of these had been constructed in the Elizabethan period at the same time as the large public theatres. Although much

smaller than the Southwark theatres, the Blackfriars, built in 1576 and rebuilt and enlarged by Burbage in 1596, had many of the characteristics of the public theatres: the stage, for example, still featured areas designated as 'heaven' and 'hell', and the audience was still distributed at different levels to watch the plays. But here, as in the Whitefriars (1606) and other private theatres such as the Salisbury Court (1629), the acting space and auditorium were more intimate and the audience more exclusive. These theatres were fully enclosed, and therefore the plays were lit artificially, leaving the audience in darkness. The stage was at one end of a rectangular space, and all members of the audience were seated. The design of these private (or 'hall') theatres meant that their capacity was much smaller than that of the public ones, probably no more than a quarter of the size, and admission prices were much higher.

By the time the Cockpit opened in Drury Lane in 1616 (mostly referred to as the Phoenix after 1617, when it burnt down and was swiftly rebuilt), the private theatres were far more financially secure institutions than the public ones, and playwrights increasingly wrote with these kinds of spaces and audiences in mind. The style of productions changed significantly, and there is a greater uniformity to the social bias in most of the plays from this later part of the historical period. By the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the majority of new plays was being written for these private theatres and for performance by companies with firm connections at court. Older plays, which had been written for the public theatres, were also revived in the various forms of theatre which survived until their closure at the outbreak of civil war in 1642.

During the reigns of the early Stuart monarchs, King James (who had been the king of Scotland since 1567 and became king of England in 1603) and his son, Charles (who succeeded him in 1625), the court became highly preoccupied with the fashionable and politically important dramatic form known as the masque. These courtly entertainments, such as *The Masque of Blackness* (1605), with their combinations of acting, music and dance, usually involved members of the nobility as performers. They relied upon the elaborate Italianate set and costume designs originated by Inigo Jones, and the writing of dramatists such as Ben Jonson, who increasingly turned to the masque form as his career developed. These court productions may account for the particular masque-like quality of some of the 'play-within-a-play' entertainments included in other texts from the period, such as the dumb show in Act IV scene i of *The Changeling*.

These principal places of theatrical entertainment – public theatre, private theatre and court – are the ones which have received most scholarly attention, since they were where the majority of the better known plays and

masques of the period were first performed. However, it is important to keep in mind that theatre was also available still from the visiting troupes of players from other parts of Europe and in the form of travelling productions in Britain and Ireland, and there continued to be theatrical activity in the houses of the aristocracy and at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Even after the civil war began in 1642, the theatre managed to survive in informal, private arrangements to re-emerge with considerable energy following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.

## A drama of institutions

Just as the proliferation of purpose-built theatres and the increased public enthusiasm for playgoing can be understood as the outcome of a particular set of social, economic and cultural configurations, so the plays written for these theatres can also be seen to be profoundly shaped by the contemporary circumstances of their production. Although some twentieth-century literary criticism reads this drama as concerned with universal and timeless issues relating to the 'human condition' – love, death, truth, loyalty, justice and morality – more recently, critics have traced the ways in which this drama is precisely *not* 'timeless' but very much 'of its age'. This concept is based upon the drama's close thematic engagement with so many of the key institutions of the time. These institutions, such as the monarchy, the church and the family, structured contemporary society. Such theatrical engagements, moreover, were far from being neutral 'reflections' of the world outside the theatre, but were often astute and passionate contributions to contemporary analyses and debates about the nature and remit of these institutions.

One of the most clear-cut examples of such an engagement concerns the location of the action of these plays: many feature court settings, presided over by figures of authority (kings, dukes or cardinals), which mimic the structures of power established by 'divine right', whereby absolute power, ultimately deriving from God, is invested in the monarch. In these dramatic worlds, we can observe the activities of rival factions, ambitious individuals from further down the social formation and those denied justice by the existing structures and systems. In *The Spanish Tragedy*, for example, following the killing of his son, Hieronimo seeks in vain to obtain justice from the king, the courts and heaven itself, whilst in *Edward II* (1592) we witness a similarly corrupt, divisive and self-interested exercise of political power at *all* levels of governance. In focusing on the imperfect exercise of political power, the plays demonstrate something of the tension which applied to the upper reaches of government in the world beyond the theatre. The considerable alterations in the social composition of the country had a

significant effect upon the way that it was governed. Embedded in the plots of many of the plays, these struggles for power and justice between competing groups or factions can be seen as more or less directly representing and interrogating the vested interests inherent in the wider social formation, and the changes in their capacity to intervene in and influence the political process; and it is to a discussion of these changes that we now turn.

It is impossible to separate political power in early modern England from religious institutions and practices. The conflicts which so indelibly mark the years of Elizabeth I and the two Stuart monarchs who succeeded her (James and Charles) have their origins in the religious turmoil of the middle decades of the sixteenth century. The reign of Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, had been characterised both by his increasing centralisation of the machinery of government (intended, amongst other things, to put an end to the internal aristocratic disputes which had led to the Wars of the Roses of 1455–85) and by his break with Rome, when the 1534 Act of Supremacy established him as head of the English Church. Apart from a brief respite offered during the reign of Mary (1553–8), Catholics were persecuted throughout the remainder of the sixteenth century, whilst English Protestantism developed in such a way as to represent a powerful new sense of Anglocentric national identity. This is not to claim the successful subjugation of other regional and national identities within the British Isles to an all-powerful English one: whilst Wales had long before been absorbed into England's sphere of influence, Scotland continued to be, until the Act of Union of 1707, a separate country with its own parliament; and Ireland remained only nominally part of the empire declared by Henry in his Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533). Nonetheless, part of the 'Tudor project' under Elizabeth continued to be the development and assertion of an English supremacy, much of which depended on Elizabeth's image as a specifically *Protestant* leader. This was skilfully cultivated and stage-managed throughout her reign, and works of propaganda against Catholicism, together with the 1588 victory over the Armada (a Spanish fleet threatening an invasion of England), helped to seal the association between the monarchy, English nationalism and Protestant theology.

The advent of Protestantism can be closely identified with the increasing influence of a class of gentry which was turning its skills to trade and commerce. Some members of this group had benefited directly from the redistribution of land following Henry's dissolution of Catholic monastic estates between 1536 and 1539. Indeed, Thomas Arden, in *Arden of Faversham* (1592), is an instance of just such a man, his wealth deriving from the sale of the lands belonging to the Abbey of

Faversham. With its ethic of individuality, self-reliance and hard work, Protestantism facilitated the turn to commerce by this segment of English people, as it had done for those abroad in the Reformation stronghold of the Netherlands. Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign, however, and increasingly during the reigns of James and Charles, this rising commercial class identified itself with more rigorous or 'Puritan' forms of Protestantism, seeking to take further the 'purification' of religious practice that they thought had been inadequately implemented by the reformed English church. This group's increasing economic power gave rise to political aspiration, representing itself in the influential trade guilds, the municipal authorities in London and other towns, and increasingly in parliament itself. Encouraged by the Catholic Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and disapproving of the Stuarts' sympathy towards Catholicism, this was the class which consolidated itself with such strength against the monarch's divine right to rule the country that it finally took complete charge in the civil wars of the 1640s. In a piece of theatre decisive enough to draw crowds from across London and beyond, Parliament executed Charles I in January 1649.

Protestantism represented an important break with the past in terms of the way that church services were organised and in the church's theories concerning the relationship between the individual and God. No longer was the priest a necessary intermediary between the believer and God, but each believer was now to take direct responsibility for the state of his or her own spiritual well-being by means of a constant process of prayer, self-scrutiny, and Bible study. The latter was made possible by new translations of the Bible from Latin into English; particularly important here was the 'Geneva' Bible (1560), the most widely used translation until the 1630s, though better known now is the King James (or 'Authorised') version, published in 1611. These translations widened direct access to the 'word of God', which had hitherto been strictly interpreted for church congregations only by priests. The self-reliance and hard work so often associated with Puritanism, then, applied to its adherents' religious beliefs and practices as well as to their business dealings.

Over the years during which the plays in this volume were written, the idea of a hierarchy of priests and bishops controlling the circulation of spiritual ideas was severely challenged, particularly in Puritan circles. The day-to-day conduct of religious life needed to be released from what Puritans saw as the clutter of icons, wealth and elaborate trappings characteristic of Catholicism, many of which had been preserved in the English church established by Henry VIII. The forms of religious worship and organisation which Puritans wanted to introduce were aimed not only at making the individual's relationship with God more direct, but also

more democratic. These more Puritan forms of Protestantism were varied, and notoriously difficult to anatomise and characterise, but ranged from a Calvinism which declared that an élite of people were 'predestined' from birth to enter heaven, to those who asserted 'free will' and the ability of any individual to gain salvation through the kind of pure life which was evidence of God's hand in their earthly conduct. Some of the later seventeenth-century religious groups advocated the abolition of church services altogether, stressed the purity of rural life, and drew up egalitarian principles to do with the rights of men and women over property and land. Such beliefs proved much too radical for those Puritans who took the reins of power in the 1640s and 1650s.

The connection between these new forms of religious life and wider aspects of government cannot be overestimated. To a greater or lesser extent, all forms of Protestantism questioned the authority of the older church establishment, but the 'purer' versions increasingly challenged contemporary forms of non-representative national and local government. The ideals of Puritanism were the foundation of many of the new settlements in America of the 1620s onwards and played the biggest part in organised dissent from the authority of the monarchy at home, underpinning the confidence of the new, largely non-aristocratic class which found representation in the parliament which eventually overthrew Charles I.

The plays of the period endlessly rehearse issues to do with the relationship between power, authority, justice and theology (the discussions between Giovanni and the Friar in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* are a good example of this), and whilst they often mock the extremes of the Puritan lifestyle, they are at the same time almost uniformly committed to reminding their audiences of the 'horrors' of Catholicism. Many plays of the period, and almost all the tragedies of revenge, are set in Catholic countries such as Italy or Spain. These were thought of as places of excess and uncontrolled appetites. Not only were these Mediterranean societies seen as being obsessed with revenge, but all aspects of their culture were thought of as lacking control and regulation. Food, manners, speech, costume and etiquette were much commented on by contemporary travellers as examples of a world of excessive consumption and gratification which lay beyond the English Channel. A particular preoccupation for English writers was with Italian sexual mores, often thought to be perverted, outlandish and undignified. In the realm of politics, Italy was singled out as a loose web of states which rivalled one another in corruption, opportunism and political intrigue. English translations of the Florentine political thinker Machiavelli, which circulated widely amongst the Elizabethan and Stuart intelligentsia,

were read as confirming this view. Spain, meanwhile, notably successful in the conquest of territory overseas, had posed an immediate and local threat in the form of the Armada of 1588, and during the period of its threatened return in the 1590s.

In fact, the drama of the time parodied and damned the 'otherness' of all manner of 'foreign' peoples. The distinctive strands of anti-semitism in some plays of the period, such as Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (c. 1589) and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (1596) had a chilling resonance for twentieth-century readers, and will continue to influence decisions about the re-staging of plays in this century. It is also possible to find casual abuse of the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish. This was the period which saw the development of the ideal of a modern 'Britishness', yet it was clearly based on the assumption that England was culturally superior. Indeed, a series of plays, now known as the 'Elect Nation' plays, were staged by the theatre owner Philip Henslowe in the first few years of the seventeenth century, with the express aim of celebrating and bolstering the superiority of a particular version of Protestant Englishness.

The marked distaste for Mediterranean Catholic culture was accompanied, ironically, by a clear fascination with its perceived excesses. In the drama of the period and in much contemporary prose, Spain and Italy could be made to represent everything that England, officially at least, had abandoned along with the doctrines of the Roman Catholic church, thus strengthening the image of a nation united against the kind of corruption and decay exhibited in these imagined Catholic worlds. Nonetheless, the design of the private theatres was heavily influenced by Italian style, and a vogue developed amongst the aristocracy for southern European music and dance. Given the suspicion that a sympathy for Catholicism lingered at court, these settings might be seen as a way by which the dramatists of the time could invite a critique of the very court which sponsored and witnessed their plays.

The early modern period saw a consolidation of a sense of nation based upon the cultivation of the distinctiveness of English Protestant identity, and a nurturing of history through the chronicles of Holinshed and Stow upon which Shakespeare, Marlowe and others based their historical dramas. However, such a project also raised immediate and unsettling questions, given the layered and fragmented society which witnessed it. For whom did such an identity make most sense, and in whose interests did it work? If a contest was underway over national identity, then the combatants were drawn from a social formation which itself was characterised by considerable instability and change. It was no longer possible, if it ever had been, to recognise a stable aristocracy which had gathered its own wealth and

prestige under conditions dictated and fostered by feudal economic systems, inheritance and an oppressive government machinery. Many new 'entrepreneurs' and beneficiaries of social mobility were able to 'buy into' the nobility, especially in the reign of James Stuart (Sir John Daw in *Epicoe* is mocked by Truewit for just this reason (I.ii.83)). Similarly the new body of politically-minded individuals inspired by a new economic system, which, as they recognised, was fundamentally altering what could be expected from society's political and social institutions, also included modernisers from old and established families.

To a large extent, this contest over a new national identity for the country was fought over the relationship between individuals and the numerous institutions which formed both the structure of the government in particular, and society in general. The existing governmental structure saw the monarch as God's representative on earth. In the body of the king (or queen) reposed the absolute authority (or 'divine right') of the monarch to rule. Royal authority was handed from monarch to monarch through death and succession. The monarch's subjects *circulated* around this absolute authority, against which their own positions in the order of things were defined. The older institutions of government reinforced this hierarchy. Elizabethan Parliaments were summoned in order to ratify and disseminate the power and authority of the queen. During his reign, James Stuart wrote extensively on the laws which governed his divine authority over his subjects, in texts such as *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1603).

A parallel can be made between this model of power and the medieval notion that the earth (the monarch) was the centre of the universe, around which the planets (his or her subjects) simply circulated. Yet just as late medieval science determined, in the face of fierce opposition from the church, that the sun was in fact the centre of the universe, the rising class of politically-minded Protestants sought to de-centre the monarch's authority. They increasingly conceived of power as residing in the institutions through which society was run, and ultimately in the elected chamber of Parliament. The new emphasis was not upon the notion of individuals as *subjects* of the monarch, but as *citizens* in the increasingly complex civil organisation to be found in society in general, particularly the society of the expanding towns and cities. This did not, of course, seamlessly succeed the notion of the individual-as-subject, but operated in tension with it and helped to raise questions about its foundation and reach. In the drama of the period, the city comedies such as *The Roaring Girl* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* represent a thoroughly 'civic' world of citizen concerns and values. However, even the history plays, such as Marlowe's *Edward II*, by no means assume an

unquestionable legitimacy for the model of individual-as-subject, for if the monarchy itself is represented as a flawed and all-too-human institution, then the subjection of the individual to it can no longer be taken for granted. So, whilst questions about the role of the individual in relation to society's institutions produced a tension at the heart of the political drama which in turn unfolded at the heart of government during the seventeenth century (revolving around such issues as the law, money, divine right, representation and religion), they also created a tension which drives the plots of many of the plays of the period. The fictional worlds of this drama, whether located in contemporary England or in distant Spain and Italy, were inhabited by citizens and subjects whose roles were similarly defined in relation to institutional concerns.

The plays are not, of course, concerned only with the 'politics' of monarchy, government and the church. In a similar way, they also debate the workings of institutions such as the law, commerce and social rank which affected not just those members of society actively involved in early modern politics, but everyone who attended the performances. Evidence that the plays directed their audiences' attentions to the experiences of everyday life can be seen, for example, through their close examination of marriage and the family, the institutions which most directly regulated sexuality. This aspect of Renaissance theatre has caught the interest of recent critics, undoubtedly because of the evolution of these institutions in the second half of the twentieth century. These old plays show how assumptions about sexuality were under intense examination in the early modern period, a time of profound transformation in notions of marriage and the family.

Questions concerning gender, sexuality and the changing structure of the family recur in much early modern drama, and are raised in comedies, tragedies and histories alike; indeed, it is difficult to identify any one play in this anthology that is not concerned to explore the meanings of one or all of these issues. This is perhaps not surprising, given the history of the period leading up to their production, which is notable for the manner in which a variety of governmental and religious institutions sought to regulate and control the sexuality of those subject to their scrutiny. Protestantism inherited a number of religious edicts from the Roman Catholic church that were designed to encourage monogamy, punish sexual irregularities, and formalise the procedures surrounding the marriage ceremony. For example, the practice familiar to modern Christian churchgoers of 'calling the banns', and the procedures for keeping records of marriages, were standardised and consolidated by canon (religious) law with a view to seeking out bigamy, incest and other forbidden practices. Nonetheless, despite the increasing

popularity of church marriages throughout the sixteenth century, legal recognition of less formal unions, known as 'clandestine marriages' (no banns, and in a parish away from home), continued, and even canon law recognised as binding any public declaration before witnesses that a man and woman considered themselves married, although a church wedding was necessary to ensure the inheritance of property. Amongst the very poor, evidence suggests that many never contracted any kind of legally recognised marriage, and were thus more free to change their partners at will. Cohabitation could be prosecuted in the church courts, but increasingly this only happened if a child was involved, as there was concern that the child or the mother might become a cost to the parish. Although the Church of England did not recognise divorce, it was the subject of intense scrutiny during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and separations between husbands and wives were not unheard of. Questions about the regulation of marriages were, then, live issues, and can be seen to inform such diverse plays as *The Tragedy of Mariam*, with its interest in the politics of divorce and marital loyalty, *Arden of Feversham*, investigating the terms and meanings of Alice's challenge to the marriage contract, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, which foregrounds the uneasy combination of economics and sexual desire in marriage partnerships, and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, which invites us to examine the foundation of sexual and social taboos in relation to its exposé of the brutal foundations and betrayals of socially sanctioned sexual relationships. The multiplicity of such troubled, and troubling, representations of the family indicates something of the pressures on, challenges to, and uncertainties about the form, foundation and function of this institution during these years.

Alongside, and as a part of, these concerns about marriage went anxieties about changes to the structure of the family itself, and the plays' obsession with conflicts which proceeded from sexual behaviour and the power associated with sexuality and gender offers a commentary on this evolution. The concept of the family had clearly been different in medieval society. Arrangements at the lower end of the social formation could sometimes be more liberal and changeable than they were to become in the early modern period, perhaps more readily following the real and fluctuating circumstances of people's lives and affections. In the upper reaches of society, the 'family' was a grouping which often extended beyond ties of blood to include servants and retainers (and this sense is apparent in *Epicoene*, when Epicoene speaks of 'a family where I govern' (III.iv.56). Marriage was often above all an economic contract, to do with the control of land, the propagation of a dynasty and the strengthening, through amalgamation, of two or more fortunes. The

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idea of mutual love, leading to the voluntary entering into a partnership for life, was a secondary consideration, if at all. This meant that both men and women could be coerced into marriages against their will which, whilst on one level effective as a means of maintaining the institution of marriage, simultaneously undermined marriage as a secure means of ensuring reproduction within wedlock.

Historians disagree about the extent to which patterns of marriage changed through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Some propose that the coercion of people into loveless marriages based on economic considerations gave way to voluntary consent in the name of love, and an emphasis, particularly amongst Puritans, of the need for *mutual* love and sympathy in marriage; others suggest that the process was much more gradual and partial than this rather optimistic version proposes. All agree, however, on the impossibility of generalising across all social ranks and all localities. What certainly seems to be the case is that this new, more mutual, model of marriage featured as an increasingly important ideal or reference point within the drama of the period; indeed, it is this that is celebrated in the opening scene of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, when Frankford and Anne have just married:

You both adorn each other, and your hands  
Methinks are matches. There's equality  
In this fair combination; you are both scholars,  
Both young, both being descended nobly.  
There's music in this sympathy, it carries  
Consort and expectation of much joy,  
Which God bestow on you, from this first day  
Until your dissolution – that's for aye.  
(I.i.65–72)

However, this rhetoric of mutuality and equality in fact did little for women's rights in marriage, in many ways making them surrender the power they might have had in earlier generations. Consent secured the economic unit of the modern marriage, which became the building block of the social formation that developed from the early modern period.

Similarly, people were drawn out of a system in which they were coerced into obedience to the queen or king by fear of physical punishment (and dazzled by the splendour of the monarch's power) and into a system in which they consented to the institutions which exercised power on their behalf. None of these new institutional arrangements enhanced the lives of most ordinary people, but they did propagate the *illusion* of progress and participation, and thereby strengthened the systems of organisation which were essential for the emerging new economic order which was to dominate succeeding centuries.

At the same time, there was considerable debate

about what constituted desirable or permissible sexual behaviour, as well as about what attributes should be ascribed to masculinity and femininity. Although not categorised in the modern way, homosexuality was an issue at the courts of Elizabeth and James, but probably as part of wider anxieties over gender, power and favouritism. There was certainly concern about the 'effeminate' nature of the contemporary male (as there is with La Foole in *Epicoene*), a concern commonly linked to the perceived unfitness of the contemporary male for military duty. At the same time, some women were seen as overly male in their attire, manner and speech. In the plays, the issue of homosexuality is most evident in *Edward II*, but there were clearly broader anxieties about gender at issue, not least in relation to the issue of the cross-dressing of boy actors for their roles as women. With plays such as *The Roaring Girl* on the stage, with its unambiguous celebration of the values and freedoms enjoyed by its cross-dressing heroine, it is perhaps easier to understand why contemporary commentators continued to rail with such vehemence against what was seen as the pernicious influence of the theatre.

The intimate connection between the institutions of society and the dramatic representations of the tensions which they produced on the contemporary stage was not lost on the authorities. Opposition to the theatre was intense and it is possible to read many accounts, particularly by Puritan commentators such as Philip Stubbes, of the perceived 'excesses' of the theatre. The playhouses and their companies were licensed by government, and individual plays were subject to censorship. These arrangements were particularly enforced by the authorities which controlled London, leading, as was discussed earlier, to the establishment of public theatres beyond their jurisdiction in the suburbs and 'liberties' of London.

What surfaced in Renaissance drama were the anxieties and discontinuities which were inevitably produced in a historical period of unprecedented economic, social and political change. It is hard to think of any issue to do with the uncertain shift of men and women from the strictures of the medieval world into the modern that is not recognised in the theatre of the day. Matters of high state, recent history, the family, the law, economics, sexuality and domestic life were brought before audiences whose changing experiences of these matters must have given the theatre a distinctive resonance and sense of topicality. The theatre was primarily a place of entertainment, and some contemporary commentators praised it for *diverting* people's minds from social unrest or even rebellion. Few accounts exist of audiences' reactions to particular plays, and it is impossible to reproduce the circumstances which would have conditioned their responses. Reading from the perspective of the twenty-

first century, however, a perspective shaped by the institutions and values which triumphed in the early modern period, it is possible to see articulated here something of the disquiet and uncertainty which accompanied the transition between two quite distinct periods of history.

Early modern society has been rightly celebrated for the rich diversity of its literature. Yet it is wrong to accompany this celebration with the assertion that these high levels of cultural achievement corresponded to a society of harmony and order. What makes the plays so compelling for modern readers and audiences is the glimpse we get of the *uncertainties* of the world which the plays sought to make sense of; and if we are ourselves products of the world which grew out of these uncertainties (as the use by critics and historians of the phrase 'early modern' to describe this period seeks to imply), then the plays speak to us of the generation of the conditions of our own existence.

Taken together, the plays chosen for this anthology range across issues which, to a greater or lesser degree, have a familiarity for modern readers. The nature of drama is such that these issues are seen as a source of conflict, with either tragic or comic effect, or a mixture of the two. What might disturb us, however, when we compare the worlds of the plays with our own, is the recognition that some of the assumptions we take for

granted about 'our' society were open to significant challenge at the time when they were first considered, and that these earlier 'alternatives' sometimes reflect poorly on the sum of human achievement over the centuries since these plays engaged their first audiences.

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For extracts from these and other relevant background texts, see the website which accompanies this book at:  
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*Renaissance Drama*  
*Renaissance Quarterly*  
*Renaissance and Reformation*  
*Renaissance Studies*  
*The Seventeenth Century*  
*Shakespeare Quarterly*  
*Shakespeare Survey*  
*Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*

Journals with a broader historical focus, but which frequently publish research on early modern culture, include:

*Critical Quarterly*  
*English Literary History*  
*Gender, Place and Culture*  
*Literature and History*  
*The Journal of British Studies*  
*New Literary History*

*Textual Practice*  
*Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*  
*Women's Writing*

Journals publishing work on social and political history include:

*Continuity and Change*  
*English Historical Review*  
*The Historical Journal*  
*History*  
*Past and Present*

Recommended, too, is *The Year's Work in English Studies*, an annual publication comprising a series of bibliographical essays offering an overview of new critical work across the field of literary studies. It is invaluable for identifying new titles relating to a given author or topic.

Electronic journals relevant to the field include:

*Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*  
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*Early Modern Literary Studies*  
<http://www.shu.ac.uk/emls/emlshome.html>

*Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies*  
<http://www.english.ufl.edu/exemplaria/>

*Explorations in Renaissance Culture*  
<http://www.smsu.edu/English/eirc/eirc.html>

*Renaissance Forum*  
<http://www.hull.ac.uk/renforum/index.html>

## Websites

These link to a wide range of sites relating to early modern writing and history, including on-line, often full-text, editions of early modern writing as well as critical materials. Most sites are freely accessible, but a few are available only through subscription.

*The Early Modern Drama Database*  
<http://www.columbia.edu/~tdk3/earlymodern.html>.  
 See, too, the linked site, *Early Modern Chronology 1453–1715*, at  
<http://www.columbia.edu/~tdk3/chronology.html>

*Literary Resources on the Net*  
<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/ren.html>

*Luminarium*  
<http://www.luminarium.org/lumina.htm>

*Renaissance Texts*  
<http://www.towson.edu/~tinkler/bookmark/rentext.html>

FURTHER READING

*Renaissance Women Online*  
<http://www.wwp.brown.edu/texts/rwoentry.html>

*Renascence Editions*  
<http://www.uoregon.edu/~rbear/ren.htm>

*The Voice of the Shuttle*  
<http://vos.ucsb.edu/>

***The Routledge Anthology of  
Renaissance Drama website***

This anthology has its own website. It includes a range of early modern documents selected for their relevance to the plays included in the volume. There are, for example, source texts for some of the plays, accounts of early modern theatres and play-goers, and examples of some of the attacks on and defences of the theatres made at the time. The site also provides links which will help readers undertaking further research into the drama of the English Renaissance.

Visit *The Routledge Anthology of Renaissance Drama* website at [www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415187346](http://www.routledge.com/textbooks/0415187346)

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# Chronology of English Culture and Society 1558–1642

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All the theatres referenced here were in London. The plays are dated by their first known performance or, where there is some doubt about this, the date that critics agree is the most likely. Non-dramatic texts are usually referenced by their publication date. However, where the text circulated earlier in manuscript form, it is included under the earlier date with the date of first publication indicated in brackets.

## Key

- (Pb): Public theatre (also known as amphitheatre or arena theatres) used by adult companies
- (Pt): Private theatre (also known as hall or indoor theatres) initially used by boys', later by adult, companies

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Theatre events</i>	<i>Plays and masques</i>	<i>Non-dramatic texts</i>
1558	Death of Mary Tudor; accession of Elizabeth I to throne.  Church of England re- established			Knox, <i>First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women</i>
1559	Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity, renouncing Pope's authority in England  Book of Common Prayer reissued			Baldwin, Ferrers <i>et al.</i> , <i>A Mirror for Magistrates</i>
1560				'Geneva' Bible  Whitehorne's translation of Machiavelli, <i>The Art of War</i>
1561				Hoby's translation of Castiglione, <i>The Courtier</i>
1562	Hawkins begins slaving expeditions to Africa		Norton and Sackville, <i>Gorboduc</i>	
1563	Convocation of Anglican church approves 39 Articles  Plague in London; kills thousands  Poor Law passed: contributions to poor relief made compulsory			Foxe, <i>Acts and Monuments</i> (in English; first published in Latin in 1559)
1564	Court of High Commission established in Ireland to enforce conformity  Riots in Ireland against English plantation			



CHRONOLOGY OF ENGLISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY 1558–1642

<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Theatre events</i>	<i>Plays and masques</i>	<i>Non-dramatic texts</i>
1565	Sir Henry Sidney made Lord Deputy of Ireland			Golding's translation of Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
1566	Rebellion against Mary, Queen of Scots		Gascoigne, <i>Supposes</i>	Painter, <i>Palace of Pleasure</i>
1567	Abdication of Mary, Queen of Scots, and accession of James VI to Scottish throne	Red Lion theatre (Pb), Whitechapel, built		
1568	Mary, Queen of Scots, flees to England			Bishops' Bible
1569	Pro-Catholic rising in north of England  Munster rebellion in Ireland defeated by Sidney			
1570	Elizabeth I excommunicated by Pope Pius V			Ascham, <i>The Schoolmaster</i>
1571	Parliament legislates against recusants  Foxe's <i>Acts and Monuments</i> to be placed in all cathedral and collegiate churches			
1572	St Bartholomew's Day massacre of Huguenots in Paris Anti-vagrancy law enacted	Actors not under aristocratic patronage declared vagabonds		
1573	Earl of Essex granted plantation rights in Ireland		Gascoigne, <i>Jocasta</i>	Gascoigne, <i>Adventures of Master F. J.</i>
1574	Statutes of Apparel (sumptuary laws) reissued			
1575	Essex's army massacres inhabitants of Rathlin Island	Paul's playhouse (Pt) opens		Tasso, <i>Gerusalemme Liberata</i>
1576	First Roman Catholic priest executed at Tyburn  Frobisher resumes search for North-West passage  Act passed requiring all corporate towns to establish workhouses	The Theatre (Pb), Shoreditch, built; replaces Red Lion  First Blackfriars theatre (Pt) built  Theatre at Newington Butts built		Digges's translation of Copernicus
1577	Drake sets out to circumnavigate the world	Curtain theatre (Pb), Shoreditch, built; not used for plays after 1625		Holinshed, <i>Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland</i>  Sidney, 'Old' <i>Arcadia</i>
1578	Drake sails into the Pacific Ocean			Lyly, <i>Euphues; The Anatomy of Wit</i>
1579	Drake claims 'New Albion' (now part of California) for England  Start of Munster rebellion (1579–83)		Sidney, <i>The Lady of May</i>	Gosson, <i>School of Abuse</i>  North's translation of Plutarch, <i>Lives</i>  Spenser, <i>Shepherd's Calendar</i>

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1580	Lord Grey made Lord Deputy of Ireland; crushes rebellion; many massacred  Drake returns to England, having sailed round the world  Jesuit missionaries arrive in Dover	Performance of plays on Sunday forbidden		Montaigne, <i>Essais</i>  Sidney, <i>Apology for Poetry</i> (published 1595)
1581	Laws against Roman Catholics passed		Newton, <i>Seneca, His Ten Tragedies Translated into English</i>  Peele, <i>The Arraignment of Paris</i>	Hall, <i>Ten Books of Homer's Iliad</i>  Sidney, <i>Astrophil and Stella</i> (published 1591)
1582	Gilbert lands in Newfoundland (now part of Canada) and declares English sovereignty			Watson, <i>Hecatompthia, or The Passionate Century of Love</i>
1583	Raleigh sails to Virginia	Queen's Men formed  Blackfriars theatre closes		Stubbes, <i>The Anatomy of Abuses</i>
1584	Newfoundland established as colony  Raleigh establishes colony at Roanoke, Virginia		Lyly, <i>Campaspe</i>	Knox, <i>History of the Reformation in Scotland</i>  Hakluyt, 'Discourse of Western Planting'
1585	Munster plantation in Ireland established		Kyd, <i>The Spanish Tragedy</i>	
1586	Treaty of Berwick between Scots and English  Roanoke colony fails; evacuated by Drake  Death of Sir Philip Sidney		Anon., <i>The Famous Victories of Henry V</i>	Camden, <i>Britannia</i> (in Latin; Holland's English translation published 1610)  Sidney, 'New' <i>Arcadia</i> (published 1590)  Webbe, <i>Discourse of English Poesy</i>
1587	Mary, Queen of Scots executed  Pope begins crusade against England  Second Roanoke colony begun	Rose theatre (Pb), Bankside, built; demolished c. 1606	Marlowe, <i>Tamburlaine the Great, Parts I and II</i>	Holinshed, <i>Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland</i> , 2nd edition
1588	Spanish Armada defeated	Death of Richard Tarlton (clown with the Queen's Men)	Lyly, <i>Endymion</i>  Anon., <i>Mucedorus</i>	Harriot, <i>A Brief and True Report of . . . Virginia</i>
1589	English attacks on coast of Portugal		Anon., <i>A Warning for Fair Women</i>  Peele, <i>The Battle of Alcazar</i>  Greene, <i>Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay</i>  Marlowe, <i>Dr Faustus, The Jew of Malta</i>	Hakluyt, <i>Principal Navigations</i>  Nashe, <i>Anatomy of Absurdity</i>  Puttenham, <i>Art of English Poesy</i>  'Marprelate' tracts
1590	Roanoke settlers disappear	Paul's playhouse closes	Anon., <i>King Leir</i>  Shakespeare, <i>Henry VI, Parts II and III; The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	Lodge, <i>Rosalind</i>  Spenser, <i>Faerie Queene, Part I</i>

CHRONOLOGY OF ENGLISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY 1558–1642

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1591			Anon., <i>The True Tragedy of Richard III</i> Peele, <i>Edward I; The Old Wives' Tale</i> Shakespeare, <i>Henry VI, Part I; The Taming of the Shrew</i>	Harrington's translation of Ariosto, <i>Orlando Furioso</i> Raleigh, <i>A Report about . . . the Isles of Azores</i>
1592	Establishment of Presbyterian Church in Scotland	Plague; theatres close for two years First of Lord Mayor's petitions against stage plays	Anon., <i>Arden of Faversham</i> Anon., <i>Thomas of Woodstock</i> Marlowe, <i>Edward II</i> Shakespeare, <i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	Lyly, <i>Gallathea</i>
1593		Death of Marlowe	Marlowe, <i>The Massacre at Paris</i> Shakespeare, <i>Titus Andronicus; Richard III</i> Mary Sidney, <i>Antonius</i>	Donne writing <i>Songs and Sonnets</i> Marlowe, <i>Hero and Leander</i> Shakespeare, <i>Venus and Adonis</i>
1594	First of series of poor harvests, leading to riots Lord Mayor's conference on problem of rogues in London Tyrone's Irish rebellion; start of Nine Years' War	Theatres reopen Death of Kyd	Heywood, <i>The Four Prentices of London</i> Shakespeare, <i>Love's Labours Lost</i> Yarrington, <i>Two Lamentable Tragedies</i>	Drayton, <i>Piers Gaveston</i> Nashe, <i>The Unfortunate Traveller</i> Shakespeare, <i>The Rape of Lucrece</i>
1595	Death of Sir Francis Drake Apprentices and masterless men riot in Southwark Fear of second Armada	Swan theatre (Pb), Bankside, built; little used after 1597, in disrepair by 1632	Munday <i>et al.</i> , <i>Sir Thomas More</i> Shakespeare, <i>Richard II; Romeo and Juliet; A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Shakespeare, <i>Sonnets</i> (published 1609) Spenser, <i>Amoretti</i>
1596	Riots against enclosures and grain prices Essex's attack on Cadiz	Second Blackfriars theatre (Pt) built, but unable to open owing to residents' petition	Jonson, <i>A Tale of a Tub</i> Shakespeare, <i>King John; The Merchant of Venice</i>	Deloney, <i>Jack of Newbury</i> Raleigh, <i>Discovery of Guiana</i> Spenser, <i>View of the Present State of Ireland; Faerie Queene, Part II</i>
1597	Second Armada fails English campaign in Low Countries Grain riots Poor Law enacted; reinforced Act of 1563		Chapman, <i>A Humorous Day's Mirth</i> Jonson, <i>The Case is Altered</i> Shakespeare, <i>Henry IV, Parts I and II; The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	Francis Bacon, <i>Essays</i> James Stuart, <i>Demonology</i>
1598	Anti-vagrancy law passed, making provision for punishment of the masterless	The theatre dismantled; timbers used as frame for the Globe theatre	Chettle and Munday, <i>Robin Hood, Parts I and II</i> Jonson, <i>Every Man in His Humour</i> Porter, <i>The Two Angry Women of Abingdon</i> Shakespeare, <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	Florio, <i>A World of Words</i> (Italian-English dictionary) Hakluyt, <i>Principal Navigations</i> , 2nd edition, 3 vols (1598–1600) Stow, <i>A Survey of London</i>

## CHRONOLOGY OF ENGLISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY 1558–1642

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1599	Earl of Essex's campaign in Ireland  Death of Spenser	Globe theatre (Pb), Bankside, opens  Second Blackfriars theatre (Pt) opens  Paul's playhouse (Pt) reopens	Dekker, <i>The Shoemaker's Holiday</i> ; <i>Old Fortunatus</i>  Heywood <i>et al.</i> ; <i>Edward IV, Parts I and II</i>  Jonson, <i>Every Man Out of His Humour</i>  Marston, <i>Antonio and Mellida</i> ; <i>Histrionmastix</i>  Shakespeare, <i>Henry V</i> ; <i>As You Like It</i> ; <i>Julius Caesar</i>	Daniel, <i>Poetical Essays</i>  James Stuart, <i>Basilikon Doron</i>
1600	East India Company founded  Essex under house arrest in London	Fortune theatre (Pb), Cripplegate, opens	Chettle, Dekker and Haughton, <i>Patient Grissel</i>  Marston, <i>Antonio's Revenge</i>  Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i>	Leo Africanus, <i>History and Description of Africa</i>
1601	Essex's revolt and execution  Further Poor Law enacted  Defeat of Spanish and Irish forces at Battle of Kinsale	Boar's Head theatre (Pb), Whitechapel, opens (converted inn)	Dekker, <i>Satiromastix</i>  Jonson, <i>Cynthia's Revels</i> ; <i>Poetaster</i>  Shakespeare, <i>Twelfth Night</i>	Dent, <i>The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven</i>
1602	Re-conquest of Ireland begins  Bodleian Library founded in Oxford		Chettle, <i>The Tragedy of Hoffman</i>  Dekker, <i>The Merry Devil of Edmonton</i>  Shakespeare, <i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	Lodge's translation of Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
1603	Death of Queen Elizabeth; James VI of Scotland accedes to English throne as James I  Witchcraft made punishable offence in English law  Raleigh imprisoned for treason	James I becomes patron of the two boys' theatre companies  Theatres closed because of plague; 33,500 die in London	Heywood, <i>A Woman Killed with Kindness</i>  Jonson, <i>Sejanus</i>  Marston, <i>The Malcontent</i>  Shakespeare, <i>Measure for Measure</i>	Knolles, <i>General History of the Turks</i>  Daniel, <i>Defence of Rhyme</i>  Florio's translation of Montaigne, <i>Essays</i> (including 'Of Cannibals')
1604	Peace treaty with Spain  Hampton Court conference: James I rejects Puritan requests for Church of England reform  James I declared king of 'Great Britain, France and Ireland'  Anti-vagrancy law of 1597 expanded	Theatres reopen  Red Bull theatre (Pb), Clerkenwell, opens (converted inn); replaces Boar's Head	Chapman, <i>Bussy d'Ambois</i>  Cary, <i>The Tragedy of Mariam</i>  Daniel, <i>Philotas</i> ; <i>The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses</i>  Dekker and Webster, <i>Westward Ho!</i>  Heywood, <i>The Wise Woman of Hogsdon</i>  Marston, <i>The Dutch Courtesan</i>  Shakespeare, <i>Othello</i> ; <i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	Dallington, <i>The View of France</i>  James Stuart, <i>Counterblast to Tobacco</i>

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1605	Gunpowder Plot Weymouth explores coast of New England		Anon., <i>A Yorkshire Tragedy</i> Chapman, Jonson and Marston, <i>Eastward Ho!</i> Dekker and Webster, <i>Northward Ho!</i> Heywood, <i>If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody</i> Jonson, <i>The Masque of Blackness</i> Middleton, <i>Michaelmas Term; A Trick to Catch the Old One</i> Shakespeare, <i>King Lear</i>	Bacon, <i>Advancement of Learning</i>
1606	Suppression of Roman Catholics by Parliament Dutch explore northern coast of 'New Holland' (Australia) Virginia Company formed	Whitefriars theatre (Pt) built Rose theatre demolished Paul's playhouse closes 'Act to Restrain the Abuses of the Players' passed	Day, <i>The Isle of Gulls</i> Jonson, <i>Volpone; Hymenaei</i> Middleton, <i>A Mad World, My Masters</i> Middleton (or Tourneur), <i>The Revenger's Tragedy</i> Shakespeare, <i>Macbeth; Antony and Cleopatra</i>	Drayton, <i>Poems Lyric and Pastoral</i>
1607	English colony founded in Jamestown, Virginia, by John Smith		Beaumont, <i>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</i> Chapman, <i>The Tragedy of Bussy d'Ambois</i> Day, Rowley and Wilkins, <i>The Travels of the Three English Brothers</i> Middleton, <i>Your Five Gallants</i> Shakespeare, <i>Pericles</i> Wilkins, <i>The Miseries of Enforced Marriage</i>	
1608	Quebec founded in 'New France' (now Canada) Parliament rejects union with Scotland	King's Men (Shakespeare's company) lease Blackfriars theatre (Pt) Theatres close because of plague	Jonson, <i>Masque of Beauty</i> Shakespeare, <i>Coriolanus</i>	Donne writing 'Holy Sonnets' and other religious poems Dekker, <i>The Bellman of London; Lanthorn and Candlelight</i>
1609	Plantation of Ulster Thomas Gates shipwrecked in Bermuda	Theatres reopen in December	Heywood and Rowley, <i>Fortune by Land and Sea</i> Jonson, <i>Masque of Queens; Epicoene, or The Silent Woman</i> Shakespeare, <i>The Winter's Tale</i>	Filmer, <i>Patriarcha</i>

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1610	New anti-vagrancy law passed Arbella Stuart, James I's cousin, imprisoned after plot to put her on throne		Beaumont and Fletcher, <i>The Maid's Tragedy</i> Chapman, <i>The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois</i> Daniel, <i>Tethys' Festival</i> Jonson, <i>The Alchemist</i> Shakespeare, <i>Cymbeline</i>	Galileo, <i>Sidereal Messenger</i> (published in Latin) Council of Virginia, <i>True Declaration of the Colony in Virginia</i> Jourdain, <i>Discovery of the Bermudas</i> ; Strachey, <i>True Reportory of the Wrack</i> (published 1625); both are accounts of Gates' 1609 shipwreck
1611			Beaumont and Fletcher, <i>A King and No King</i> Dekker, <i>If It Be Not Good, the Devil Is In It</i> Jonson, <i>Oberon; Cataline His Conspiracy</i> Middleton and Dekker, <i>The Roaring Girl</i> Shakespeare, <i>The Tempest</i> Tourneur, <i>The Atheist's Tragedy</i>	'Authorised' (King James) version of the Bible Coryat, <i>Crudities</i> Lanyer, <i>Salve Deus Rex Judearum</i>
1612	Lancashire witches hanged Prince Henry dies Bermuda colonised under Virginia Company charter East India Company settles in Gujerat, India		Fletcher, <i>The Captain</i> Webster, <i>The White Devil</i>	Bacon, <i>Essays</i> (2nd edition) Drayton, <i>Poly-Olbion, Part I</i> Heywood, <i>An Apology for Actors</i>
1613	Frances Howard's divorce approved; she marries Somerset; murder of Thomas Overbury	Globe theatre burns down	Campion, <i>The Somerset Masque</i> Fletcher, <i>The Scornful Lady</i> Jonson, <i>The Irish Masque at Court</i> Middleton, <i>A Chaste Maid in Cheapside</i> Shakespeare and Fletcher, <i>Henry VIII; The Two Noble Kinsmen</i>	
1614	Parliament dissolved; not called again until 1621	Second Globe theatre (Pb) built Hope theatre (Pb) built; after 1617 used mainly for bear- and bull-baiting	Fletcher, <i>Wit Without Money</i> Jonson, <i>Bartholomew Fair</i> Webster, <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>	Chapman's translation of Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> , Books I–XII Raleigh, <i>History of the World</i>
1615	John Smith explores coast of New England Trial and conviction of Frances Howard for murder of Overbury Death of Arbella Stuart in the Tower		Middleton, <i>The Witch</i>	Chapman's translation of the <i>Odyssey</i> , Books XIII–XIV Crooke, <i>Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man</i>

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1616	King sells peerages to raise money Pocohontas arrives in England Harvey lectures on circulation of the blood Raleigh released for final expedition to Guiana	Deaths of Shakespeare and Beaumont Cockpit theatre (Pt) opens	Jonson, <i>The Devil is an Ass</i> Middleton and Rowley, <i>A Fair Quarrel</i>	Jonson, <i>Workes</i> James Stuart, <i>Works</i>
1617		Cockpit theatre burns down and is rebuilt; hereafter known as the Phoenix	Jonson, <i>Christmas His Masque</i> Webster, <i>The Devil's Law Case</i>	Fynes Moryson, <i>Itinerary Containing His Ten Years Travel</i>
1618	Execution of Raleigh, following his third failed expedition to South America Start of Thirty Years' War; fought mostly in Germany, between Catholics and Protestants Virginia Charter of Liberties granted Bacon made Lord Chancellor James I issues 'Declaration concerning Sports'		Fletcher, <i>The Loyal Subject</i> Jonson, <i>Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue</i> Middleton, <i>Hengist, King of Kent</i>	
1619	First African slaves transported into Jamestown by Dutch Queen Anne dies		Ford, <i>The Lawes of Candy</i>	
1620	Freedom of worship granted to Roman Catholics in England Pilgrim Fathers sail from Plymouth to Massachusetts in the <i>Mayflower</i> James I pronounces against women wearing men's apparel		Fletcher, <i>Women Pleased</i> Jonson, <i>News from the New World</i> Middleton and Rowley, <i>The World Tossed at Tennis</i>	Bacon, <i>Novum Organum</i>
1621	First of three years of bad harvests Donne becomes Dean of St Paul's Parliament called; Bacon impeached	Fortune theatre (Pb) burns down; rebuilt	Dekker, Ford and Rowley, <i>The Witch of Edmonton</i> Fletcher, <i>The Wild Goose Chase</i>	Burton, <i>Anatomy of Melancholy</i> Wroth, <i>Urania</i>
1622	Massacre of 300 colonists at Jamestown by Powhatan confederacy		Fletcher and Massinger, <i>The Sea Voyage</i> Massinger, <i>The Duke of Milan</i> Middleton and Rowley, <i>The Changeling</i>	Publication in London of <i>The Courant or Weekly News</i> , an early newspaper Drayton, <i>Poly-Olbion, Part II</i>
1623			Dekker and Ford, <i>The Spanish Gypsy</i> Fletcher, <i>The Wandering Lovers</i>	Shakespeare, 'The First Folio'

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1624	Collapse of Virginia Company		Fletcher, <i>Rule a Wife and Have a Wife</i> Heywood, <i>The Captives</i> Jonson, <i>Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion</i> Middleton, <i>A Game at Chess</i>	Smith, <i>General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles</i>
1625	Death of James I; accession of his son as Charles I, marriage to Henrietta Maria Plague; 35,500 deaths in London	Theatres closed for several months, owing to plague Death of Fletcher	Heywood, <i>The English Traveller</i> Jonson, <i>The Fortunate Isles, and Their Union</i> Massinger, <i>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</i> Middleton, <i>Women Beware Women</i> Webster and Rowley, <i>A Cure for a Cuckold</i>	Purchas, <i>Purchas His Pilgrims</i>
1626	Death of Bacon		Jonson, <i>The Staple of News</i> Massinger, <i>The Roman Actor</i> Shirley, <i>The Maid's Revenge</i>	Bacon, <i>New Atlantis</i> Cary, <i>The Raign and Death of Edward II</i> Sandys's translation of Ovid, <i>Metamorphoses</i>
1627 1628	Barbados colonised by English	Death of Middleton	Davenant, <i>The Cruel Brother</i> Ford, <i>The Lover's Melancholy</i> Shirley, <i>The Witty Fair One</i>	Harvey, <i>On the Motion of the Heart and Blood</i>
1629	Charles I dissolves Parliament; rules without it for 11 years Massachusetts Bay Company founded	Salisbury Court theatre (Pt) opens	Brome, <i>The Lovesick Maid</i> Jonson, <i>The New Inn</i> Massinger, <i>The Picture</i>	
1630	Peace treaties with Spain and France	Theatres closed for seven months because of plague	Brome, <i>The City Wit</i> Heywood, <i>The Fair Maid of the West, Part II</i>	
1631	Death of Donne		Brome, <i>The Queen's Exchange</i> Dekker, <i>The Wonder of a Kingdom</i> Ford, <i>The Broken Heart</i> Massinger, <i>Believe as You List</i> Shirley, <i>Love's Cruelty</i>	
1632		Deaths of Webster and Dekker	Brome, <i>The Weeding of the Covent Garden</i> Ford, <i>Love's Sacrifice</i> Jonson, <i>The Magnetic Lady</i> Massinger, <i>The City Madam</i> Shirley, <i>Hyde Park</i>	T. E., <i>The Law's Resolutions of Women's Rights</i> Milton, 'L'Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso'



CHRONOLOGY OF ENGLISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY 1558–1642

<i>Date</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Theatre events</i>	<i>Plays and masques</i>	<i>Non-dramatic texts</i>
1633	Laud appointed Archbishop of Canterbury  Galileo forced to recant his support for Copernican theory by the Inquisition in Rome  Charles I reissues 1618 'Declaration Concerning Sports'		Ford, <i>'Tis Pity She's a Whore</i> , <i>Perkin Warbeck</i>  Heywood, <i>A Maidenhead Well Lost</i>  Massinger, <i>The Guardian</i>  Shirley, <i>The Gamester</i>	Donne, <i>Poems</i>  Herbert, <i>The Temple</i>  Prynne, <i>Histriomastix</i>
1634			Brome and Heywood, <i>The Late Lancashire Witches</i>  Carew, <i>Coelum Britannicum</i>  Davenant, <i>Love and Honour</i>  Milton, <i>Comus</i>	
1635			Brome, <i>The New Academy</i>  Heywood, <i>A Challenge for Beauty</i>  Jordan, <i>Money is an Ass</i>  Shirley, <i>The Coronation</i>	
1636		Theatres closed in May because of plague; 10,500 die in London	Massinger, <i>The Bashful Lover</i>	
1637	Prynne mutilated and jailed for criticising church  English traders land on the coast of China	Theatres reopen in October  Deaths of Jonson and Rowley	Brome, <i>The English Moor</i>  Shirley, <i>The Royal Master</i>  Suckling, <i>Aglaura</i>	Milton, <i>Lycidas</i>  Suckling, 'Session of the Poets'
1638			Brome, <i>The Antipodes</i>  Davenant, <i>The Fair Favourite</i>  Ford, <i>The Lady's Trial</i>  Suckling, <i>The Goblins</i>	
1639		Death of Cary	Brome, <i>The Lovesick Court</i>  Davenant, <i>The Spanish Lovers</i>  Shirley, <i>The Politician</i>	
1640	Short Parliament called in April  Long Parliament called in November; sits until 1649  Prynne released  English trading factory set up in Madras	Death of Ford	Brome, <i>The Court Beggar</i>  Cavendish and Shirley, <i>The Country Captain</i>  Davenant, <i>Salmacida Spolia</i>	Carew, <i>Poems</i>  Jonson, <i>Timber</i> , <i>Underwoods</i>
1641	Star Chamber abolished; Laud impeached	Death of Heywood	Brome, <i>A Jovial Crew</i>  Jordan, <i>The Walks of Islington and Hogsdon</i>  Shirley, <i>The Cardinal</i>	Milton, <i>Of Reformation Touching Church Discipline</i>
1642	Civil War begins  Battle of Edgehill	Parliament closes theatres; reopen 1660	Shirley, <i>The Sisters</i>	Browne, <i>Religio Medici</i>  Denham, 'Cooper's Hill'

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## **The Plays**

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## Editorial Note

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The texts of the plays and masque included in this collection have all been newly edited from the earliest published editions with reference to later editions. Further details of editions consulted are included in the headnote to each play. Typographical errors in the first edition have been silently corrected. Textual variants have been footnoted only where significant to the meaning. No typographical distinction has been made between stage directions from the first edition and those added by later editors. The spelling has been modernised throughout. The punctuation has been modernised where necessary to make the text clear to a modern reader, but no attempt has been made to make it conform to current conventions.

In the footnotes, the letters 'SD' indicate stage directions and 'SP' indicate speech prefixes. Where annotations from earlier editions are cited, the name of the editor is given in brackets. Works consulted in the preparation of the footnotes are given below. Any abbreviations used to refer to them are given in brackets.

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## Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy*

First performed 1585

First published 1592

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As the earliest play in this collection, *The Spanish Tragedy* can be thought of as establishing a number of significant aspects of style and subject that were to be developed by later playwrights. There is no known source for the play, although some critics believe it may have shared one, now lost, with *Hamlet* (1600) or that an earlier version of *The Spanish Tragedy* may have inspired Shakespeare's work. Whatever the case, Kyd's play was clearly popular in its day and much imitated (and parodied) by other dramatists.

Kyd's play adapts a range of devices and themes from the Roman dramatist Seneca (c. 4 BC–AD 64). The ghost, the use of soliloquy, the play-within-the-play, the madness and suicide (as well as the principal theme of revenge itself) all emerge from the Elizabethan preoccupation with Senecan drama. Kyd's innovations include a topical context for the revenge theme, the 1580 war between Portugal and Spain; and, together with other dramatists of his day, he seems to owe something, in his representation of villainy, to the political philosophy of the Florentine writer Niccolò Machiavelli. In *Bel-imperia*, Kyd created an eloquent and purposeful female figure, such as had been rare on earlier English stages.

That a play about intrigue, corruption and dishonourable death in Spain was popular in an (officially) Protestant country should not surprise us. Elizabeth had been excommunicated for heresy by Pope Pius V in 1570 and, after an initial period of relative calm, anti-Catholic feeling was running high at the time of *The Spanish Tragedy*. This was exacerbated by increasing anxiety over relations with Spain itself. What may be considered surprising, however, is the manner in which the play invited its audience to consider extremely sensitive aspects of the profound social changes that were occurring in England at the time.

The framing device provided by the presence and commentary of the Ghost of Don Andrea and the figure of Revenge, grounded as it is in a Renaissance vision of a classical underworld, tends to universalise, as well as mirror, the action in the main play. Thus Don Andrea's impatience for revenge (I.v and II.i) is linked to Hieronimo's increasing frustration with the agencies of earthly justice, so that both figures seem situated at

first in the tradition of an 'Everyman'. Hieronimo, however, is able to move forward from this position into one of decisiveness and action. This occurs at the point in the play when, as Andy Mousley has noted, 'the possibility of revenge finding legitimate expression through an official and universally recognised exercise of justice becomes increasingly remote' (Mousley 2000: 68).

Revenge's promise to Don Andrea that he will turn 'their day to night' (I.v.7) never seems in doubt; revenge from beyond the grave seems preordained. The figure of Hieronimo, however, is altogether too human in the uncertainty of his dilemma, his role and the extent of his power. As Catherine Belsey has remarked, Hieronimo is 'uncertain whether he speaks in the name – the discourse – of heaven or hell, or neither' so that when he bites out his tongue (IV.iv.191) he is 'repudiating the right which defines the subject, the right of speech itself' (Belsey 1985: 75).

Hieronimo, as a 'subject', is defined by a range of institutional discourses. His position as Knight Marshal places him at the heart of the Spanish state, yet this guarantees him nothing in a world of such Machiavellian figures as Lorenzo. Indeed, his distracted tearing of the papers of the petitioners (III.xiii.122) signals a despair over the functions of the law which some critics have seen as a parallel with the situation in contemporary England. The empty box of the Pedringano sub-plot is a powerful sign of the manipulation of symbols of justice and redemption in the hands of the cynical: despite his murder of Serberine, the hapless Pedringano is clearly as much a victim of the controlling Lorenzo as Hieronimo has become.

Hieronimo becomes caught between the strictures of Christian teaching, which expressly forbade private acts of revenge (Romans 12.19) and the seductive reasoning of Seneca; on the one hand 'heaven will be revenged of every ill' (III.xiii.2) and on the other 'Strike, and strike home, where wrong is offered thee' (III.xiii.7). Having contemplated suicide, tested the institutions of justice and endured madness, Hieronimo enacts an elaborate private revenge which, paradoxically, sees him operating as an agent of the divine in the justice that Revenge has promised the

Ghost of Don Andrea. As in *Hamlet*, other figures are swept up in the course of vengeance, which careers to a macabre conclusion that begs further questions about justice, the state and the individual.

In *The Spanish Tragedy* and other revenge plays, dramatists were able to explore topical issues from the comparative safety of the stage. Hieronimo's dilemma and consequent actions are a compelling refracted image of the world inhabited by his audience: chivalric values, long-established systems of law and retribution, and implicit faith in divine and human authorities were all giving ground to more secular, pragmatic and 'political' systems of social organisation and cultural expression. Distanced from the action (at once identifying with, but ethically repulsed by, the actions of the figures on the stage) an audience might recognise only too well that such plays as *The Spanish Tragedy* announced the uncertain shift of values and priorities that defined the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The appeal of these plays to succeeding generations signals that the world that emerged from this uncertainty was the one that shaped their own history.

### Textual note

This edition is based on the octavo-in-fours edition believed to date from 1592, the single copy of which is held by the British Library in London (referred to in the footnotes to the text as Q). A further nine editions were published between 1594 and 1633 (evidence of the popularity of the play), and the corrections and variations in these have influenced modern editions; some of these include the anonymous passages known as the 'Additions' from 1602. This edition retains the unusual four-act structure of the earliest editions but we have introduced scene divisions.

## Further reading

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### Works of related interest

- William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* (1593)
- William Shakespeare, *Richard III* (1593)
- William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1600)
- John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge* (1600)
- Henry Chettle, *The Tragedy of Hoffman* (1602)
- Thomas Middleton or Cyril Tourneur, *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606)
- George Chapman, *The Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois* (1607)
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- Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611)
- John Webster, *The White Devil* (1612)
- John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614)
- Thomas Middleton, *The Changeling* (1622)
- Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women* (1625)
- John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633)



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# *The Spanish Tragedy* (1585)

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## Dramatis personae

GHOST OF ANDREA

REVENGE

KING OF SPAIN

CYPRIAN, DUKE OF CASTILE, *his brother*

LORENZO, *the Duke's son*

BEL-IMPERIA, *Lorenzo's sister*

GENERAL, *of the Spanish Army*

VICEROY OF PORTUGAL

PEDRO, *his brother*

BALTHAZAR, *his son*

ALEXANDRO, *Portuguese nobleman*

VILLUPPO, *Portuguese nobleman*

AMBASSADOR *of Portugal to the Spanish court*

HIERONIMO, *Knight Marshal of Spain*

ISABELLA, *his wife*

HORATIO, *their son*

PEDRINGANO, *servant to Bel-imperia*

SERBERINE, *servant to Balthazar*

CHRISTOPHIL, *servant to Lorenzo*

BAZULTO, *an old man*

*Page to LORENZO, Three Watchmen, Messenger, Deputy, Hangman, Maid to ISABELLA, Two Portuguese, Servant, Three Citizens, Portuguese Nobles, Soldiers, Officers, Attendants, Halberdiers, Three Knights, Three Kings, a Drummer in the first Dumb-show, Hymen, Two Torch-bearers in the second Dumb-show*

## Act I, scene i

*Enter the GHOST OF ANDREA, and with him REVENGE*

ANDREA When this eternal substance of my soul  
Did live imprisoned in my wanton flesh,  
Each in their function serving other's need,  
I was a courtier in the Spanish court.  
My name was Don Andrea, my descent,  
Though not ignoble, yet inferior far  
To gracious fortunes of my tender youth:  
For there in prime and pride of all my years,  
By duteous service and deserving love,  
In secret I possessed a worthy dame, 10  
Which hight sweet Bel-imperia by name.  
But in the harvest of my summer joys  
Death's winter nipped the blossoms of my bliss,  
Forcing divorce betwixt my love and me.  
For in the late conflict with Portingale  
My valour drew me into danger's mouth,  
Till life to death made passage through my wounds.  
When I was slain, my soul descended straight  
To pass the flowing stream of Acheron:  
But churlish Charon, only boatman there, 20  
Said that my rites of burial not performed,

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SD *Enter the GHOST*: a reference in Thomas Dekker's pamphlet *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606) suggests that this entrance was made from the stage trapdoor

1-2 These opening lines can be compared with the parody in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, V.316-17: 'When I was mortal, this my costive corpse/Did lap up figs and raisins in the Strand'

8 prime: spring-time

11 hight: was called

18-85 Don Andrea's description of the underworld is developed from Virgil's *Aeneid* (Book VI) with Kyd adapting Virgil to present his own peculiar vision of a classical scene which would have been familiar to many in his audience. A parallel is developed between Don Andrea's passage through the underworld and that of Virgil's Aeneas

19 Acheron: associated here with the river Styx, across which the dead were ferried by Charon

I might not sit amongst his passengers.  
 Ere Sol had slept three nights in Thetis' lap  
 And slaked his smoking chariot in her flood,  
 By Don Horatio, our Knight Marshal's son,  
 My funerals and obsequies were done.  
 Then was the ferryman of hell content  
 To pass me over to the slimy strond,  
 That leads to fell Avernus' ugly waves:  
 There, pleasing Cerberus with honeyed speech, 30  
 I passed the perils of the foremost porch.  
 Not far from hence, amidst ten thousand souls,  
 Sat Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanth,  
 To whom no sooner gan I make approach,  
 To crave a passport for my wandering ghost,  
 But Minos, in graven leaves of lottery,  
 Drew forth the manner of my life and death.  
 'This knight', quoth he, 'both lived and died in love,  
 And for his love tried fortune of the wars,  
 And by war's fortune lost both love and life.' 40  
 'Why then,' said Aeacus, 'convey him hence,  
 To walk with lovers in our fields of love,  
 And spend the course of everlasting time  
 Under green myrtle trees and cypress shades.'  
 'No, no,' said Rhadamanth, 'it were not well  
 With loving souls to place a martialist:  
 He died in war, and must to martial fields,  
 Where wounded Hector lives in lasting pain,  
 And Achilles' Myrmidons do scour the plain.' 50  
 Then Minos, mildest censor of the three,  
 Made this device to end the difference.  
 'Send him,' quoth he, 'to our infernal king,  
 To doom him as best seems his majesty.'

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- 23 Sol: the Sun  
 Thetis: the daughter of Nereus, a sea-god, thus the sea  
 25 Knight Marshal: an officer in an English royal palace  
 with responsibility for upholding the law in the  
 household and within 'the verge', an area within a radius  
 of twelve miles of the palace  
 28 strond: strand or shore  
 29 Avernus: a lake thought of as an entrance to the  
 underworld  
 30 Cerberus: a three-headed dog which guarded the  
 entrance  
 33 Minos, Aeacus, and Rhadamanth: worthy inhabitants of  
 the underworld who stood in judgement over those who  
 entered  
 34 gan: began  
 35 a passport: a safe-conduct  
 36 Minos: the chief judge, with the casting vote. In Virgil,  
 lots are drawn from an urn to determine the fate of the  
 dead, but here Minos seems to be reading an account of  
 Don Andrea's life in order to judge his worth  
 46 martialist: a soldier  
 49 Myrmidons: the killers of Hector  
 50 censor: judge  
 53 doom him: make the judgement

To this effect my passport straight was drawn.  
 In keeping on my way to Pluto's court,  
 Through dreadful shades of ever-glooming night,  
 I saw more sights than thousand tongues can tell,  
 Or pens can write, or mortal hearts can think.  
 Three ways there were: that on the right-hand side  
 Was ready way unto the foresaid fields, 60  
 Where lovers live and bloody martialists,  
 But either sort contained within his bounds.  
 The left-hand path, declining fearfully,  
 Was ready downfall to the deepest hell,  
 Where bloody Furies shakes their whips of steel,  
 And poor Ixion turns an endless wheel;  
 Where usurers are choked with melting gold,  
 And wantons are embraced with ugly snakes,  
 And murderers groan with never-killing wounds,  
 And perjured wights scalded in boiling lead, 70  
 And all foul sins with torments overwhelmed.  
 'Twixt these two ways I trod the middle path  
 Which brought me to the fair Elysian green,  
 In midst whereof there stands a stately tower,  
 The walls of brass, the gates of adamant.  
 Here finding Pluto with his Proserpine,  
 I showed my passport, humbled on my knee;  
 Whereat fair Proserpine began to smile,  
 And begged that only she might give my doom.  
 Pluto was pleased, and sealed it with a kiss. 80  
 Forthwith, Revenge, she rounded thee in th'ear,  
 And bade thee lead me through the gates of horn,  
 Where dreams have passage in the silent night.  
 No sooner had she spoke but we were here,  
 I wot not how, in twinkling of an eye.  
 REVENGE Then know, Andrea, that thou art arrived  
 Where thou shalt see the author of thy death,  
 Don Balthazar, the prince of Portingale,  
 Deprived of life by Bel-imperia.  
 Here sit we down to see the mystery, 90  
 And serve for Chorus in this tragedy.

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- 55 Pluto's court: Pluto was the king of the underworld  
 65 Furies: the mythical avengers of wickedness  
 66 Ixion: a lover condemned to an everlasting treadmill  
 67 usurers: money-lenders  
 73 Elysian green: the place of the blessed in the afterlife  
 76 Proserpine: the queen of the underworld  
 81 rounded thee: whispered  
 82 gates of horn: the gates of true dreams in the *Aeneid*  
 85 wot: know  
 86-9 The audience is told in advance the substance of the  
 drama to come, importantly affecting its response to and  
 judgement of the unfolding events. Revenge and Don  
 Andrea remain on view throughout the play, often in a  
 location somehow 'between' the action and the audience  
 (downstage or in a gallery), their presence almost  
 mediating the developing action upon which they  
 comment as a chorus

## Act I, scene ii

Enter SPANISH KING, GENERAL, CASTILE, HIERONIMO

KING Now say, Lord General, how fares our camp?

GENERAL All well, my sovereign liege, except some few  
That are deceased by fortune of the war.

KING But what portends thy cheerful countenance,  
And posting to our presence thus in haste?

Speak man, hath fortune given us victory?

GENERAL Victory, my liege, and that with little loss.

KING Our Portingals will pay us tribute then?

GENERAL Tribute and wonted homage therewithal.

KING Then blest be heaven, and guider of the heavens,  
From whose fair influence such justice flows.

CASTILE *O multum dilecte Deo, tibi militat aether,  
Et conjuratae curvato poplite gentes  
Succumbunt: recti soror est victoria juris.*

KING Thanks to my loving brother of Castile.

But General, unfold in brief discourse  
Your form of battle and your war's success,  
That adding all the pleasure of thy news  
Unto the height of former happiness,  
With deeper wage and greater dignity  
We may reward thy blissful chivalry.

GENERAL Where Spain and Portingale do jointly knit

Their frontiers, leaning on each other's bound,  
There met our armies in their proud array:  
Both furnished well, both full of hope and fear,  
Both menacing alike with daring shows,  
Both vaunting sundry colours of device,  
Both cheerly sounding trumpets, drums and fifes,  
Both raising dreadful clamours to the sky,  
That valleys, hills, and rivers made rebound,  
And heaven itself was frightened with the sound.  
Our battles both were pitched in squadron form,  
Each corner strongly fenced with wings of shot:

But ere we joined and came to push of pike  
I brought a squadron of our readiest shot  
From out our rearward to begin the fight:  
They brought another wing to encounter us.  
Meanwhile, our ordnance played on either side,  
And captains strove to have their valours tried.  
Don Pedro, their chief horsemen's colonel,  
Did with his cornet bravely make attempt  
To break the order of our battle ranks:  
But Don Rogero, worthy man of war,  
Marched forth against him with our musketeers,  
And stopped the malice of his fell approach.  
While they maintain hot skirmish to and fro,  
Both battles join and fall to handy blows,  
Their violent shot resembling th' ocean's rage,  
When, roaring loud, and with a swelling tide,  
It beats upon the rampiers of huge rocks,  
And gapes to swallow neighbour-bounding lands.  
Now while Bellona rageth here and there,  
Thick storms of bullets rain like winter's hail,  
And shivered lances dark the troubled air.  
*Pede pes et cuspidis cuspidis;  
Arma sonant armis, vir petiturque viro.*  
On every side drop captains to the ground,  
And soldiers, some ill-maimed, some slain outright:  
Here falls a body scindere from his head,  
There legs and arms lie bleeding on the grass,  
Mingled with weapons and unbowelled steeds,  
That scattering overspread the purple plain.  
In all this turmoil, three long hours and more,  
The victory to neither part inclined,  
Till Don Andrea with his brave lancers,  
In their main battle made so great a breach  
That, half dismayed, the multitude retired:  
But Balthazar, the Portingals' young prince,  
Brought rescue, and encouraged them to stay.  
Here-hence the fight was eagerly renewed,  
And in that conflict was Andrea slain—  
Brave man at arms, but weak to Balthazar.

1 camp: the army in the field

5 posting: speeding

8 Portingals: the Portuguese  
tribute: tribute money

12-14 *O multum dilecte . . . est victoria juris*: 'O one much loved of God, for thee the heavens contend, and the united peoples fall down on bended knee: victory is sister to just right.' Adapted from *De Terio Consulatu Honorii* by the Roman poet Claudian (AD 395-404)

20 wage: reward

23 bound: boundary

25 furnished well: well-equipped

27 vaunting sundry colours of device: proudly showing their heraldic banners

32 battles both were pitched in squadron form: formations of soldiers in squares

33 wings of shot: outer 'wings' of soldiers with guns on the outside of the squares

34 push of pike: fighting in close quarters, hand-to-hand

38 ordnance: heavy artillery

41 cornet: cavalry, identified by the cornet banner at their head

47 handy: hand-to-hand

50 rampiers: ramparts

52 Bellona: the Roman goddess of war

55-6 *Pede pes . . . petiturque viro*: 'Foot against foot and spear against spear, arms ring on arms and man is assailed by man'

59 scindere: sundered, or cleaved

61 unbowelled: disembowelled

62 purple: blood-drenched

65 lancers: lancers

70 Here-hence: as a result of this

Yet while the prince, insulting over him,  
Breathed out proud vaunts, sounding to our reproach,  
Friendship and hardy valour joined in one  
Pricked forth Horatio, our Knight Marshal's son,  
To challenge forth that prince in single fight.  
Not long between these twain the fight endured,  
But straight the prince was beaten from his horse,  
And forced to yield him prisoner to his foe: 80  
When he was taken, all the rest they fled,  
And our carbines pursued them to the death,  
Till, Phoebus waning to the western deep,  
Our trumpeters were charged to sound retreat.  
KING Thanks good Lord General for these good news;  
And for some argument of more to come,  
Take this and wear it for thy sovereign's sake.

*Give him his chain*

But tell me now, hast thou confirmed a peace?  
GENERAL No peace, my liege, but peace conditional,  
That if with homage tribute be well paid, 90  
The fury of your forces will be stayed:  
And to this peace their viceroy hath subscribed,

*Give the KING a paper*

And made a solemn vow that, during life,  
His tribute shall be truly paid to Spain.  
KING These words, these deeds, become thy person  
well.  
But now, Knight Marshal, frolic with thy king,  
For 'tis thy son that wins this battle's prize.  
HIERONIMO Long may he live to serve my sovereign  
liege,  
And soon decay unless he serve my liege.

*A tucket afar off*

KING Nor thou, nor he, shall die without reward. 100  
What means the warning of the trumpet's sound?  
GENERAL This tells me that your grace's men of war,  
Such as war's fortune hath reserved from death,  
Come marching on towards your royal seat,  
To show themselves before your majesty,  
For so I gave in charge at my depart.  
Whereby by demonstration shall appear,  
That all (except three hundred or few more)  
Are safe returned and by their foes enriched.

73 insulting: proudly exulting

74 sounding to: inferring

76 Pricked forth: spurred on

80 him: himself

83 Phoebus: the sun  
deep: the sea

86 argument: token

89 but: except

91 stayed: stopped

92 subscribed: signed his name

96 frolic: celebrate

99 decay: decline in well-being

*The Army enters; BALTHAZAR, between LORENZO and  
HORATIO, captive*

KING A gladsome sight. I long to see them here. 110

*They enter and pass by*

Was that the warlike prince of Portingale,  
That by our nephew was in triumph led?  
GENERAL It was, my liege, the prince of Portingale.  
KING But what was he that on the other side  
Held him by th'arm as partner of the prize?  
HIERONIMO That was my son, my gracious sovereign,  
Of whom, though from his tender infancy  
My loving thoughts did never hope but well,  
He never pleased his father's eyes till now,  
Nor filled my heart with overcloying joys. 120  
KING Go let them march once more about these walls,  
That staying them we may confer and talk  
With our brave prisoner and his double guard.  
Hieronimo, it greatly pleaseth us,  
That in our victory thou have a share,  
By virtue of thy worthy son's exploit.

*Enter the Army again*

Bring hither the young prince of Portingale:  
The rest march on, but ere they be dismissed,  
We will bestow on every soldier  
Two ducats, and on every leader ten, 130  
That they may know our largess welcomes them.

*Exeunt all the Army but BALTHAZAR, LORENZO,  
HORATIO*

Welcome, Don Balthazar, welcome, nephew,  
And thou, Horatio, thou art welcome too.  
Young prince, although thy father's hard misdeeds,  
In keeping back the tribute that he owes,  
Deserve but evil measure at our hands,  
Yet shalt thou know that Spain is honourable.  
BALTHAZAR The trespass that my father made in peace  
Is now controlled by fortune of the wars;  
And cards once dealt, it boots not ask why so. 140  
His men are slain, a weakening to his realm,  
His colours seized, a blot unto his name,  
His son distressed, a corsive to his heart:  
Those punishments may clear his late offence.  
KING Ay, Balthazar, if he observe this truce,  
Our peace will grow the stronger for these wars.  
Meanwhile live thou, though not in liberty,  
Yet free from bearing any servile yoke;  
For in our hearing thy deserts were great,

120 overcloying: satisfying

122 staying: stopping

131 largess: generosity (in gifts or money)

139 controlled: kept in check

143 corsive: corrosive

144 clear: cancel out

late: previous, recent

And in our sight thyself art gracious. 150  
 BALTHAZAR And I shall study to deserve this grace.  
 KING But tell me, for their holding makes me doubt,  
 To which of these twain art thou prisoner?  
 LORENZO To me, my liege.  
 HORATIO To me, my sovereign.  
 LORENZO This hand first took his courser by the reins.  
 HORATIO But first my lance did put him from his  
 horse.  
 LORENZO I seized his weapon, and enjoyed it first.  
 HORATIO But first I forced him lay his weapons down.  
 KING Let go his arm, upon our privilege.

*They let him go*

Say, worthy prince, to whether didst thou yield? 160  
 BALTHAZAR To him in courtesy, to this perforce:  
 He spake me fair, this other gave me strokes;  
 He promised life, this other threatened death;  
 He wan my love, this other conquered me:  
 And truth to say I yield myself to both.  
 HIERONIMO But that I know your grace for just and  
 wise,  
 And might seem partial in this difference,  
 Enforced by nature and by law of arms  
 My tongue should plead for young Horatio's right.  
 He hunted well that was a lion's death, 170  
 Not he that in a garment wore his skin:  
 So hares may pull dead lions by the beard.  
 KING Content thee, Marshal, thou shalt have no  
 wrong;  
 And for thy sake thy son shall want no right.  
 Will both abide the censure of my doom?  
 LORENZO I crave no better than your grace awards.  
 HORATIO Nor I, although I sit beside my right.  
 KING Then by my judgement thus your strife shall end:  
 You both deserve and both shall have reward.  
 Nephew, thou took'st his weapon and his horse, 180  
 His weapons and his horse are thy reward.  
 Horatio, thou didst force him first to yield,  
 His ransom therefore is thy valour's fee:  
 Appoint the sum as you shall both agree.  
 But nephew, thou shalt have the prince in guard,  
 For thine estate best fitteth such a guest:  
 Horatio's house were small for all his train.

155 courser: horse

159 upon our privilege: upon our absolute authority

160 whether: which of the two

164 wan: won

167 And might seem partial: Hieronimo says that he may not  
 be impartial since they are speaking of his son

170-2 Hieronimo says that Horatio should be credited as the  
 true victor, referring, as Edwards has done, to the Fourth  
 Fable of Avian concerning an ass who dresses in a lion's  
 skin

175 censure of my doom: the result of my judgement

177 sit beside: set aside or forgo

Yet in regard thy substance passeth his,  
 And that just guerdon may befall desert,  
 To him we yield the armour of the prince. 190  
 How likes Don Balthazar of this device?  
 BALTHAZAR Right well my liege, if this proviso were,  
 That Don Horatio bear us company,  
 Whom I admire and love for chivalry.  
 KING Horatio, leave him not that loves thee so.  
 Now let us hence to see our soldiers paid,  
 And feast our prisoner as our friendly guest.

*Exeunt*

## Act I, scene iii

*Enter VICEROY, ALEXANDRO, VILLUPPO, Attendants*

VICEROY Is our ambassador despatched for Spain?  
 ALEXANDRO Two days, my liege, are passed since his  
 depart.  
 VICEROY And tribute payment gone along with him?  
 ALEXANDRO Ay my good lord.  
 VICEROY Then rest we here awhile in our unrest,  
 And feed our sorrows with some inward sighs,  
 For deepest cares break never into tears.  
 But wherefore sit I in a regal throne?  
 This better fits a wretch's endless moan.

*Falls to the ground*

Yet this is higher than my fortunes reach, 10  
 And therefore better than my state deserves.  
 Ay, ay, this earth, image of melancholy,  
 Seeks him whom fates adjudge to tears:  
 Here let me lie, now am I at the lowest.  
*Qui jacet in terra, non habet unde cadat.*  
*In me consumpsit vires fortuna nocendo,*  
*Nil superest ut jam possit obesse magis.*  
 Yes, Fortune may bereave me of my crown:  
 Here, take it now; let Fortune do her worst,  
 She will not rob me of this sable weed: 20  
 O no, she envies none but pleasant things.  
 Such is the folly of spiteful chance!  
 Fortune is blind and sees not my deserts,

188 in regard: with regard to the fact that, or since

189 guerdon: reward

190 him: Horatio

191 device: the judgement (which takes account of the social  
 hierarchy as well as the original problem)

15-17 *Qui jacet . . . obesse magis*: 'If one lies on the ground, one  
 can fall no further. Towards me fortune has exhausted  
 her power to hurt; nothing can harm me more.' The first  
 sentence is from Alanus de Insulis, *Lib. Parah*, cap 2, 1.19,  
 the second from Seneca's *Agamemnon*, 1.698

20 sable weed: black clothing (expressing his melancholy)

22 spiteful: malicious

23-30 Fortune is blind . . . fickle winds?: Fortune was  
 commonly shown as blind and deaf, standing on a rolling  
 sphere

So is she deaf and hears not my laments:  
 And could she hear, yet is she wilful mad,  
 And therefore will not pity my distress.  
 Suppose that she could pity me, what then?  
 What help can be expected at her hands,  
 Whose foot is standing on a rolling stone,  
 And mind more mutable than fickle winds?  
 Why wail I then, where's hope of no redress?  
 O yes, complaining makes my grief seem less.  
 My late ambition hath distained my faith,  
 My breach of faith occasioned bloody wars,  
 Those bloody wars have spent my treasure,  
 And with my treasure my people's blood,  
 And with their blood, my joy and best beloved,  
 My best beloved, my sweet and only son.  
 O wherefore went I not to war myself?  
 The cause was mine, I might have died for both: 40  
 My years were mellow, his but young and green,  
 My death were natural, but his was forced.  
 ALEXANDRO No doubt, my liege, but still the prince  
 survives.  
 VICEROY Survives! Ay, where?  
 ALEXANDRO In Spain, a prisoner by mischance of war.  
 VICEROY Then they have slain him for his father's fault.  
 ALEXANDRO That were a breach to common law of arms.  
 VICEROY They reckon no laws that meditate revenge.  
 ALEXANDRO His ransom's worth will stay from foul  
 revenge. 49  
 VICEROY No, if he lived the news would soon be here.  
 ALEXANDRO Nay, evil news fly faster still than good.  
 VICEROY Tell me no more of news, for he is dead.  
 VILLUPPO My sovereign, pardon the author of ill news,  
 And I'll bewray the fortune of thy son.  
 VICEROY Speak on, I'll guerdon thee whate'er it be:  
 Mine ear is ready to receive ill news,  
 My heart grown hard 'gainst mischief's battery,  
 Stand up I say, and tell thy tale at large.  
 VILLUPPO Then hear that truth which these mine eyes  
 have seen.  
 When both the armies were in battle joined, 60  
 Don Balthazar, amidst the thickest troops,  
 To win renown did wondrous feats of arms:  
 Amongst the rest I saw him hand to hand  
 In single fight with their Lord General;  
 Till Alexandro, that here counterfeits  
 Under the colour of a duteous friend,  
 Discharged his pistol at the prince's back,  
 As though he would have slain their general.

30 mutable: changeable  
 42 forced: unnatural  
 46 fault: crime  
 48 reckon: heed, acknowledge  
 54 bewray: reveal  
 55 guerdon: reward  
 57 mischief: misfortune

But therewithal Don Balthazar fell down,  
 And when he fell, then we began to fly: 70  
 But had he lived, the day had sure been ours.  
 ALEXANDRO O wicked forgery! O traitorous miscreant!  
 VICEROY Hold thou thy peace! But now, Villuppo, say,  
 Where then became the carcase of my son?  
 30 VILLUPPO I saw them drag it to the Spanish tents.  
 VICEROY Ay, ay, my nightly dreams have told me this.  
 Thou false, unkind, unthankful, traitorous beast,  
 Wherein had Balthazar offended thee,  
 That thou shouldst thus betray him to our foes?  
 Was't Spanish gold that bleared so thine eyes 80  
 That thou couldst see no part of our deserts?  
 Perchance because thou art Terceira's lord  
 Thou hadst some hope to wear this diadem,  
 If first my son and then myself were slain:  
 But thy ambitious thought shall break thy neck.  
 Ay, this was it that made thee spill his blood,  
*Take the crown and put it on again*  
 But I'll now wear it till thy blood be spilt.  
 ALEXANDRO Vouchsafe, dread sovereign, to hear me  
 speak.  
 VICEROY Away with him, his sight is second hell;  
 Keep him till we determine of his death. 90  
*Exeunt Attendants with ALEXANDRO*  
 If Balthazar be dead, he shall not live.  
 Villuppo, follow us for thy reward. *Exit VICEROY*  
 VILLUPPO Thus have I with an envious, forged tale  
 Deceived the king, betrayed mine enemy,  
 And hope for guerdon of my villainy. *Exit*

## Act I, scene iv

*Enter HORATIO and BEL-IMPERIA*

BEL-IMPERIA Signior Horatio, this is the place and hour  
 Wherein I must entreat thee to relate  
 The circumstance of Don Andrea's death,  
 Who, living, was my garland's sweetest flower,  
 And in his death hath buried my delights.  
 HORATIO For love of him and service to yourself,  
 I will refuse this heavy doleful charge,  
 Yet tears and sighs, I fear will hinder me.  
 When both our armies were enjoined in fight,  
 Your worthy chevalier amidst the thick'st, 10  
 For glorious cause still aiming at the fairest,

72 forgery: malicious fabrication  
 miscreant: villain

82 Terceira's lord: as Capitão Donatorio of Terceira, in the  
 Azores, Alexandro has tremendous power

93 envious: malicious

7 nill: will not

11 For glorious cause . . . the fairest: aiming to perform in  
 the cause of the love inspired by Bel-imperia

Was at the last by young Don Balthazar  
 Encountered hand to hand: their fight was long,  
 Their hearts were great, their clamours menacing,  
 Their strength alike, their strokes both dangerous.  
 But wrathful Nemesis, that wicked power,  
 Envyng at Andrea's praise and worth,  
 Cut short his life, to end his praise and worth.  
 She, she herself, disguised in armour's mask,  
 (As Pallas was before proud Pergamus) 20  
 Brought in a fresh supply of halberdiers,  
 Which paunched his horse, and dinged him to the  
 ground.  
 Then young Don Balthazar with ruthless rage  
 Taking advantage of his foe's distress,  
 Did finish what his halberdiers begun,  
 And left not till Andrea's life was done.  
 Then, though too late, incensed with just remorse  
 I with my band set forth against the prince  
 And brought him prisoner from his halberdiers.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Would thou hadst slain him that so slew  
 my love. 30  
 But then was Don Andrea's carcase lost?  
 HORATIO No, that was it for which I chiefly strove,  
 Nor stepped I back till I recovered him:  
 I took him up, and wound him in mine arms,  
 And welding him unto my private tent,  
 There laid him down, and dewed him with my tears  
 And sighed and sorrowed as became a friend.  
 But neither friendly sorrow, sighs nor tears  
 Could win pale Death from his usurped right.  
 Yet this I did, and less I could not do: 40  
 I saw him honoured with due funeral.  
 This scarf I plucked from off his lifeless arm,  
 And wear it in remembrance of my friend.  
 BEL-IMPERIA I know the scarf, would he had kept it  
 still,  
 For had he lived he would have kept it still,  
 And worn it for his Bel-imperia's sake:  
 For 'twas my favour at his last depart.  
 But now wear thou it both for him and me,  
 For after him thou hast deserved it best.

16 Nemesis: the goddess of retribution, especially against humans

20 Pallas: Athene, one of the divinities associated with the Greeks at Troy, or Pergamus. Kyd refers to the *Aeneid* where she is mentioned, although it was Juno who was 'girt with steel'

21 halberdiers: soldiers armed with halberds, a combined spear and axe

22 paunched: stabbed in the belly  
 dinged: knocked, struck

27 just remorse: sorrow, pity

42 scarf: lady's favour worn by a knight in the field but, now worn by Horatio, also representing his loyalty to Don Andrea

But, for thy kindness in his life and death, 50  
 Be sure while Bel-imperia's life endures,  
 She will be Don Horatio's thankful friend.  
 HORATIO And, madam, Don Horatio will not slack  
 Humbly to serve fair Bel-imperia.  
 But now, if your good liking stand thereto,  
 I'll crave your pardon to go seek the prince,  
 For so the duke your father gave me charge. *Exit*  
 BEL-IMPERIA Ay, go Horatio, leave me here alone,  
 For solitude best fits my cheerless mood. 60  
 Yet what avails to wail Andrea's death,  
 From whence Horatio proves my second love?  
 Had he not loved Andrea as he did,  
 He could not sit in Bel-imperia's thoughts.  
 But how can love find harbour in my breast,  
 Till I revenge the death of my beloved?  
 Yes, second love shall further my revenge.  
 I'll love Horatio, my Andrea's friend,  
 The more to spite the prince that wrought his end.  
 And where Don Balthazar, that slew my love,  
 Himself now pleads for favour at my hands, 70  
 He shall in rigour of my just disdain  
 Reap long repentance for his murderous deed.  
 For what was't else but murderous cowardice,  
 So many to oppress one valiant knight,  
 Without respect of honour in the fight?  
 And here he comes that murdered my delight.

*Enter LORENZO and BALTHAZAR*

LORENZO Sister, what means this melancholy walk?  
 BEL-IMPERIA That for a while I wish no company.  
 LORENZO But here the prince is come to visit you.  
 BEL-IMPERIA That argues that he lives in liberty. 80  
 BALTHAZAR No madam, but in pleasing servitude.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Your prison then belike is your conceit.  
 BALTHAZAR Ay, by conceit my freedom is enthralled.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Then with conceit enlarge yourself again.  
 BALTHAZAR What if conceit have laid my heart to gage?  
 BEL-IMPERIA Pay that you borrowed and recover it.  
 BALTHAZAR I die if it return from whence it lies.  
 BEL-IMPERIA A heartless man, and live? A miracle!  
 BALTHAZAR Ay lady, love can work such miracles.  
 LORENZO Tush, tush, my lord, let go these ambages, 90  
 And in plain terms acquaint her with your love.

71 disdain: indignation

77-89 Sister, what means . . . such miracles: this line-by-line dialogue (stichomythia) is one of the dramatic conventions derived from the Roman writer Seneca

82 conceit: imagination

83 enthralled: enslaved

84 enlarge: set free

85 laid my heart to gage: given as a pledge

90 ambages: roundabout ways of speaking

BEL-IMPERIA What boots complaint, when there's no remedy?

BALTHAZAR Yes, to your gracious self must I complain,  
In whose fair answer lies my remedy,  
On whose perfection all my thoughts attend,  
On whose aspect mine eyes find beauty's bower,  
In whose translucent breast my heart is lodged.

BEL-IMPERIA Alas, my lord, these are but words of course,  
And but device to drive me from this place.  
*She, in going in, lets fall her glove, which Horatio, coming out, takes up*

HORATIO Madam, your glove. **100**

BEL-IMPERIA Thanks good Horatio, take it for thy pains.

BALTHAZAR Signior Horatio stooped in happy time.

HORATIO I reaped more grace than I deserved or hoped.

LORENZO My lord, be not dismayed for what is past,  
You know that women oft are humorous:  
These clouds will overblow with little wind;  
Let me alone, I'll scatter them myself.  
Meanwhile let us devise to spend the time  
In some delightful sports and revelling. **109**

HORATIO The king, my lords, is coming hither straight,  
To feast the Portingale ambassador:  
Things were in readiness before I came.

BALTHAZAR Then here it fits us to attend the king,  
To welcome hither our ambassador,  
And learn my father and my country's health.

*Enter the Banquet, Trumpets, the KING and*  
AMBASSADOR

KING See Lord Ambassador, how Spain entreats  
Their prisoner Balthazar, thy viceroy's son:  
We pleasure more in kindness than in wars.

AMBASSADOR Sad is our king, and Portingale laments,  
Supposing that Don Balthazar is slain. **120**

BALTHAZAR *(Aside)* So am I slain by beauty's tyranny.  
*(To him)* You see, my lord, how Balthazar is slain:  
I frolic with the Duke of Castile's son,  
Wrapped every hour in pleasures of the court,  
And graced with favours of his majesty.

KING Put off your greetings till our feast be done;  
Now come and sit with us and taste our cheer.  
*They sit to the banquet*

Sit down young prince, you are our second guest;  
Brother sit down and nephew take your place;  
Signior Horatio, wait thou upon our cup, **130**

92 What boots complaint: what point is there in pleading your love?  
96 aspect: appearance  
98 words of course: conventional phrases  
105 humorous: temperamental

For well thou hast deserved to be honoured.  
Now, Lordings, fall to; Spain is Portugal,  
And Portugal is Spain, we both are friends,  
Tribute is paid, and we enjoy our right.  
But where is old Hieronimo, our marshal?  
He promised us, in honour of our guest,  
To grace our banquet with some pompous jest.

*Enter HIERONIMO with a Drum, three Knights, each with his scutcheon: then he fetches three Kings, the Knights take their crowns and them captive*

Hieronimo, this masque contents mine eye,  
Although I sound not well the mystery.

HIERONIMO The first armed knight, that hung his scutcheon up, **140**  
*He takes the scutcheon and gives it to the KING*  
Was English Robert, Earl of Gloucester,  
Who when King Stephen bore sway in Albion,  
Arrived with five and twenty thousand men  
In Portingale, and by success of war  
Enforced the king, then but a Saracen,  
To bear the yoke of the English monarchy.

KING My lord of Portingale, by this you see  
That which may comfort both your king and you,  
And make your late discomfort seem the less.  
But say, Hieronimo, what was the next? **150**

HIERONIMO The second knight, that hung his scutcheon up, *He doth as he did before*  
Was Edmund, Earl of Kent in Albion,  
When English Richard wore the diadem;  
He came likewise, and razed Lisbon walls,  
And took the King of Portingale in fight:  
For which, and other suchlike service done,  
He after was created Duke of York.

KING This is another special argument,  
That Portingale may deign to bear our yoke,  
When it by little England hath been yoked. **160**  
But now Hieronimo, what were the last?

HIERONIMO The third and last, not least in our account, *Doing as before*  
Was as the rest a valiant Englishman,  
Brave John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster,  
As by his scutcheon plainly may appear.  
He with a puissant army came to Spain,  
And took our King of Castile prisoner.

137 pompous jest: stately entertainment  
SD Although Hieronimo's masque contains errors and is difficult to source, it would have appealed to an Elizabethan audience's patriotism at a time of constant tension between England and Spain. A scutcheon is a shield with armorial bearings  
139 mystery: hidden meaning  
142 Albion: England  
158 special argument: appropriate illustration  
166 puissant: powerful



AMBASSADOR This is an argument for our viceroy,  
That Spain may not insult for her success,  
Since English warriors likewise conquered Spain, 170  
And made them bow their knees to Albion.

KING Hieronimo, I drink to thee for this device,  
Which hath pleased both the ambassador and me;  
Pledge me, Hieronimo, if thou love the king.

*Takes the cup of* HORATIO

My lord, I fear we sit but over-long,  
Unless our dainties were more delicate:  
But welcome are you to the best we have.  
Now let us in, that you may be despatched,  
I think our council is already set.

*Exeunt omnes*

## Act I, scene v

ANDREA Come we for this from depth of underground,  
To see him feast that gave me my death's wound?  
These pleasant sights are sorrow to my soul,  
Nothing but league, and love, and banqueting!

REVENGE Be still Andrea, ere we go from hence,  
I'll turn their friendship into fell despite,  
Their love to mortal hate, their day to night,  
Their hope into despair, their peace to war,  
Their joys to pain, their bliss to misery.

## Act II, scene i

*Enter* LORENZO *and* BALTHAZAR

LORENZO My lord, though Bel-imperia seem thus coy,  
Let reason hold you in your wonted joy:  
In time the savage bull sustains the yoke,  
In time all haggard hawks will stoop to lure,  
In time small wedges cleave the hardest oak,  
In time the flint is pierced with softest shower'—  
And she in time will fall from her disdain,

172 device: entertainment

176 Unless: unless it were that

1-4 Don Andrea complains at being made to witness events which necessarily disturb him, a situation which arises for ghosts in Senecan tragedy

6 fell despite: cruel hatred

1 coy: unresponsive

2 wonted: accustomed

3-10 'In time . . . stony wall.': these lines echo a popular sonnet of the time on the subject of the courting of reluctant women by Thomas Watson; see Watson's Sonnet XLVII in his *Hecatombathia* (1582)

4 haggard: wild

stoop to lure: a term derived from the training of hawks which swoop to lures of dead birds or bundles of feathers shaped to look like birds

And rue the sufferance of your friendly pain.  
BALTHAZAR 'No, she is wilder, and more hard withal,  
Than beast, or bird, or tree, or stony wall.' 10

But wherefore blot I Bel-imperia's name?  
It is my fault, not she, that merits blame.

My feature is not to content her sight,  
My words are rude and work her no delight.

The lines I send her are but harsh and ill,  
Such as do drop from Pan and Marsyas' quill.

My presents are not of sufficient cost,  
And being worthless all my labour's lost.

Yet might she love me for my valiancy;  
Ay, but that's slandered by captivity. 20

Yet might she love me to content her sire;  
Ay, but her reason masters his desire.

Yet might she love me as her brother's friend;  
Ay, but her hopes aim at some other end.

Yet might she love me to uprear her state;  
Ay, but perhaps she hopes some nobler mate.

Yet might she love me as her beauty's thrall;  
Ay, but I fear she cannot love at all.

LORENZO My lord, for my sake leave these ecstasies,  
And doubt not but we'll find some remedy. 30

Some cause there is that lets you not be loved:  
First that must needs be known, and then removed.

What if my sister love some other knight?  
BALTHAZAR My summer's day will turn to winter's

night.

LORENZO I have already found a stratagem,  
To sound the bottom of this doubtful theme.

My lord, for once you shall be ruled by me:  
Hinder me not whate'er you hear or see.

By force or fair means will I cast about  
To find the truth of all this question out. 40

Ho, Pedringano!  
PEDRINGANO (*Within*) Signior!

LORENZO *Vien qui presto.*

*Enter* PEDRINGANO  
PEDRINGANO Hath your lordship any service to  
command me?

8 rue: pity  
sufferance: patient endurance

13 feature: form, bearing, rather than simply the face

16 Pan and Marsyas: two gods who lost flute-playing

contests with Apollo

quill: a) reed (as in a flute); b) pen

19 valiancy: valour

20 slandered: brought into disrepute

25 uprear her state: improve her social position

29 ecstasies: unreasoning passions. Lorenzo implies that

Balthazar is exaggerating

36 sound the bottom: to get to the bottom, as in sounding

the depth of water beneath a vessel

41 *Vien qui presto*: 'Come here quickly' (Italian)

LORENZO Ay, Pedringano, service of import.  
 And not to spend the time in trifling words,  
 Thus stands the case: it is not long thou know'st,  
 Since I did shield thee from my father's wrath,  
 For thy conveyance in Andrea's love,  
 For which thou wert adjudged to punishment.  
 I stood betwixt thee and thy punishment;  
 And since, thou know'st how I have favoured thee. 50  
 Now to these favours will I add reward,  
 Not with fair words, but store of golden coin,  
 And lands and living joined with dignities,  
 If thou but satisfy my just demand.

Tell truth and have me for thy lasting friend.  
 PEDRINGANO What'er it be your lordship shall demand,  
 My bounden duty bids me tell the truth,  
 If case it lie in me to tell the truth.

LORENZO Then, Pedringano, this is my demand:  
 Whom loves my sister Bel-imperia? 60  
 For she repositeth all her trust in thee:  
 Speak man, and gain both friendship and reward:  
 I mean, whom loves she in Andrea's place?

PEDRINGANO Alas, my lord, since Don Andrea's death,  
 I have no credit with her as before,  
 And therefore know not if she love or no.

LORENZO Nay, if thou dally then I am thy foe,  
*Draws his sword*  
 And fear shall force what friendship cannot win.  
 Thy death shall bury what thy life conceals.  
 Thou diest for more esteeming her than me. 70

PEDRINGANO O, stay, my lord!  
 LORENZO Yet speak the truth and I will guerdon thee,  
 And shield thee from whatever can ensue,  
 And will conceal what'er proceeds from thee:  
 But if thou dally once again, thou diest.

PEDRINGANO If Madam Bel-imperia be in love—  
 LORENZO What, villain, ifs and ands?

*Offers to kill him*  
 PEDRINGANO O stay my lord, she loves Horatio.

*BALTHAZAR starts back*  
 LORENZO What, Don Horatio our Knight Marshal's  
 son?

PEDRINGANO Even him my lord. 80  
 LORENZO Now say but how know'st thou he is her love;  
 And thou shalt find me kind and liberal:  
 Stand up, I say, and fearless tell the truth.

PEDRINGANO She sent him letters which myself  
 perused,  
 Full-fraught with lines and arguments of love

47 conveyance: secret undertaking

52 store: abundance

58 If case it lie in me: in case I am able

65 credit: particular relationship

71 stay: wait

72 guerdon: reward

85 Full-fraught: loaded

Preferring him before Prince Balthazar.

LORENZO Swear on this cross that what thou say'st is  
 true,

And that thou wilt conceal what thou hast told.

PEDRINGANO I swear to both by him that made us all.

LORENZO In hope thine oath is true, here's thy reward,  
 But if I prove thee perjured and unjust, 91  
 This very sword whereon thou took'st thine oath,  
 Shall be the worker of thy tragedy.

PEDRINGANO What I have said is true, and shall for me  
 Be still concealed from Bel-imperia.

Besides, your honour's liberality  
 Deserves my duteous service even till death.

LORENZO Let this be all that thou shalt do for me:  
 Be watchful when, and where, these lovers meet,  
 And give me notice in some secret sort. 100

PEDRINGANO I will my lord.

LORENZO Then shalt thou find that I am liberal.  
 Thou know'st that I can more advance thy state  
 Than she, be therefore wise and fail me not.  
 Go and attend her as thy custom is,  
 Lest absence make her think thou dost amiss.

*Exit PEDRINGANO*

Why so: *tam armis quam ingenio*:

Where words prevail not, violence prevails;  
 But gold doth more than either of them both.  
 How likes Prince Balthazar this stratagem? 110

BALTHAZAR Both well, and ill: it makes me glad and  
 sad:

Glad, that I know the hinderer of my love,  
 Sad, that I fear she hates me whom I love.  
 Glad, that I know on whom to be revenged,  
 Sad, that she'll fly me if I take revenge.  
 Yet must I take revenge or die myself,  
 For love resisted grows impatient.  
 I think Horatio be my destined plague:  
 First, in his hand he brandished a sword,  
 And with that sword he fiercely waged war, 120  
 And in that war he gave me dangerous wounds,  
 And by those wounds he forced me to yield,  
 And by my yielding I became his slave.  
 Now in his mouth he carries pleasing words,  
 Which pleasing words do harbour sweet conceits,  
 Which sweet conceits are limed with sly deceits,  
 Which sly deceits smooth Bel-imperia's ears,  
 And through her ears dive down into her heart,

87 this cross: the cross of his sword-hilt

91 unjust: dishonest

100 in some secret sort: by some secret means

103 advance thy state: improve your social and financial status

107 *tam armis quam ingenio*: 'by equal parts of force and skill'

125 sweet conceits: pleasing figures of speech

126 limed: made into traps, as in the use of bird-lime, a sticky  
 substance used to trap birds  
 smooth: seduce

And in her heart set him where I should stand.  
 Thus hath he ta'en my body by his force, 130  
 And now by sleight would captivate my soul:  
 But in his fall I'll tempt the destinies,  
 And either lose my life, or win my love.  
 LORENZO Let's go, my lord, your staying stays revenge.  
 Do you but follow me and gain your love:  
 Her favour must be won by his remove.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene ii

*Enter HORATIO and BEL-IMPERIA*

HORATIO Now, madam, since by favour of your love  
 Our hidden smoke is turned to open flame,  
 And that with looks and words we feed our thoughts  
 (Two chief contents, where more cannot be had),  
 Thus in the midst of love's fair blandishments,  
 Why show you sign of inward languishments?  
 PEDRINGANO *showeth all to the PRINCE and LORENZO,*  
*placing them in secret above*  
 BEL-IMPERIA My heart, sweet friend, is like a ship at sea:  
 She wisheth port, where riding all at ease,  
 She may repair what stormy times have worn,  
 And leaning on the shore, may sing with joy 10  
 That pleasure follows pain, and bliss annoy.  
 Possession of thy love is th'only port,  
 Wherein my heart, with fears and hopes long tossed,  
 Each hour doth wish and long to make resort;  
 There to repair the joys that it hath lost,  
 And sitting safe, to sing in Cupid's choir  
 That sweetest bliss is crown of love's desire.  
 BALTHAZAR O sleep mine eyes, see not my love  
 profaned;  
 Be deaf, my ears, hear not my discontent;  
 Die, heart, another joys what thou deservest. 20  
 LORENZO Watch still mine eyes, to see this love  
 disjoined;  
 Hear still mine ears, to hear them both lament;  
 Live, heart, to joy at fond Horatio's fall.

BEL-IMPERIA Why stands Horatio speechless all this  
 while?  
 HORATIO The less I speak, the more I meditate.  
 BEL-IMPERIA But whereon dost thou chiefly meditate?  
 HORATIO On dangers past, and pleasures to ensue.  
 BALTHAZAR On pleasures past, and dangers to ensue.  
 BEL-IMPERIA What dangers and what pleasures dost  
 thou mean?  
 HORATIO Dangers of war and pleasures of our love. 30  
 LORENZO Dangers of death, but pleasures none at all.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Let dangers go, thy war shall be with me,  
 But such a war as breaks no bond of peace.  
 Speak thou fair words, I'll cross them with fair words;  
 Send thou sweet looks, I'll meet them with sweet  
 looks;  
 Write loving lines, I'll answer loving lines;  
 Give me a kiss, I'll countercheck thy kiss:  
 Be this our warring peace, or peaceful war.  
 HORATIO But gracious madam, then appoint the field  
 Where trial of this war shall first be made. 40  
 BALTHAZAR Ambitious villain, how his boldness  
 grows!  
 BEL-IMPERIA Then be thy father's pleasant bower the  
 field,  
 Where first we vowed a mutual amity:  
 The court were dangerous, that place is safe.  
 Our hour shall be when Vesper gins to rise,  
 That summons home distressful travellers.  
 There none shall hear us but the harmless birds:  
 Happily the gentle nightingale  
 Shall carol us asleep ere we be ware,  
 And singing with the prickle at her breast, 50  
 Tell our delight and mirthful dalliance.  
 Till then each hour will seem a year and more.  
 HORATIO But, honey sweet, and honourable love,  
 Return we now into your father's sight:  
 Dangerous suspicion waits on our delight.  
 LORENZO Ay, danger mixed with jealous despite  
 Shall send thy soul into eternal night.

*Exeunt*

131 sleight: trickery  
 132 in his fall I'll tempt the destinies: in his downfall I'll  
 tempt the gods of fate  
 136 his remove: his removal (by death)  
 2 smoke: emotion  
 flame: passion  
 4 contents: sources of contentment  
 5 blandishments: elaborate speeches  
 6 languishments: weariness  
 8D Balthazar and Lorenzo watch the lovers from the balcony  
 or upper-stage  
 9 repair: restore  
 10 sing: celebrate  
 20 joys: enjoys  
 23 fond: foolish

34 cross: match, complement  
 37 countercheck: oppose  
 42 bower: an arbour, a seat in a garden half-enclosed by  
 plants and foliage  
 45 Vesper: Venus, the evening star  
 gins: begins  
 46 distressful travellers: weary labourers or 'travailleurs'  
 48 Happily: haply, perhaps  
 50 prickle at her breast: a thorn at her breast. This is a  
 reference to the legend of Philomena who revenged  
 herself on her brother-in-law Tereus after he had raped  
 her and pricked her breast with a thorn to remember her  
 suffering  
 56 jealous: watchful, suspicious. The use of three syllables  
 maintains the metre

**Act II, scene iii**

*Enter* KING OF SPAIN, PORTINGALE, AMBASSADOR, DON CYPRIAN, *etc.*

KING Brother of Castile, to the prince's love  
What says your daughter Bel-imperia?  
CASTILE Although she coy it as becomes her kind,  
And yet dissemble that she loves the prince,  
I doubt not, I, but she will stoop in time.  
And were she froward, which she will not be,  
Yet herein shall she follow my advice,  
Which is to love him or forgo my love.  
KING Then, Lord Ambassador of Portingale,  
Advise thy king to make this marriage up,  
For strengthening of our late-confirmed league;  
I know no better means to make us friends.  
Her dowry shall be large and liberal:  
Besides that she is daughter and half-heir  
Unto our brother here, Don Cyprian,  
And shall enjoy the moiety of his land,  
I'll grace her marriage with an uncle's gift.  
And this it is: in case the match go forward,  
The tribute which you pay shall be released,  
And if by Balthazar she have a son,  
He shall enjoy the kingdom after us.  
AMBASSADOR I'll make the motion to my sovereign  
liege,  
And work it if my counsel may prevail.  
KING Do so, my lord, and if he give consent,  
I hope his presence here will honour us  
In celebration of the nuptial day:  
And let himself determine of the time.  
AMBASSADOR Will't please your grace command me  
aught beside?  
KING Commend me to the king, and so farewell.  
But where's Prince Balthazar to take his leave? 30  
AMBASSADOR That is performed already, my good lord.  
KING Amongst the rest of what you have in charge,  
The prince's ransom must not be forgot;  
That's none of mine, but his that took him prisoner,  
And well his forwardness deserves reward:  
It was Horatio, our Knight Marshal's son.  
AMBASSADOR Between us there's a price already  
pitched,

3 coy it: pretends disinterest  
4 dissemble: pretends  
5 stoop: become obedient  
6 froward: perverse  
16 moiety: half-share  
19 released: cancelled  
22 make the motion: put the proposal  
35 forwardness: enterprise  
37 pitched: settled, agreed

And shall be sent with all convenient speed.  
KING Then once again farewell, my lord. 39  
AMBASSADOR Farewell, my Lord of Castile and the  
rest. *Exit*  
KING Now, brother, you must take some little pains  
To win fair Bel-imperia from her will:  
Young virgins must be ruled by their friends.  
The prince is amiable, and loves her well,  
If she neglect him and forgo his love,  
She both will wrong her own estate and ours.  
Therefore, whiles I do entertain the prince  
With greatest pleasure that our court affords,  
Endeavour you to win your daughter's thought:  
If she give back, all this will come to naught. 50  
*Exeunt*

**Act II, scene iv**

*Enter* HORATIO, BEL-IMPERIA, and PEDRINGANO

HORATIO Now that the night begins with sable wings  
To overcloud the brightness of the sun,  
And that in darkness pleasures may be done,  
Come Bel-imperia, let us to the bower,  
And there in safety pass a pleasant hour. 20  
BEL-IMPERIA I follow thee my love, and will not back,  
Although my fainting heart controls my soul.  
HORATIO Why, make you doubt of Pedringano's faith?  
BEL-IMPERIA No, he is as trusty as my second self.  
Go Pedringano, watch without the gate, 10  
And let us know if any make approach.  
PEDRINGANO (*Aside*) Instead of watching, I'll deserve  
more gold  
By fetching Don Lorenzo to this match.  
*Exit* PEDRINGANO  
HORATIO What means my love?  
BEL-IMPERIA I know not what myself.  
And yet my heart foretells me some mischance.  
HORATIO Sweet say not so, fair fortune is our friend,  
And heavens have shut up day to pleasure us.  
The stars thou see'st hold back their twinkling shine,  
And Luna hides herself to pleasure us.  
BEL-IMPERIA Thou hast prevailed, I'll conquer my  
misdoubt, 20

38 all convenient speed: as quickly as possible

42 will: wilfulness

50 give back: turn her back. Edwards notes that the usual meaning of 'retreat' or 'yield' is inappropriate

1-5 A sense of foreboding is invoked in associating night and darkness with protection rather than threat

1 sable: black

7 controls: oppresses

10 without: outside

13 match: meeting

19 Luna: the moon

And in thy love and counsel drown my fear.  
 I fear no more, love now is all my thoughts.  
 Why sit we not? For pleasure asketh ease.  
 HORATIO The more thou sit'st within these leafy  
     bowers,  
     The more will Flora deck it with her flowers.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Ay, but if Flora spy Horatio here,  
     Her jealous eye will think I sit too near.  
 HORATIO Hark, madam, how the birds record by night,  
     For joy that Bel-imperia sits in sight.  
 BEL-IMPERIA No, Cupid counterfeits the nightingale, 30  
     To frame sweet music to Horatio's tale.  
 HORATIO If Cupid sing, then Venus is not far:  
     Ay, thou art Venus or some fairer star.  
 BEL-IMPERIA If I be Venus thou must needs be Mars,  
     And where Mars reigneth, there must needs be wars.  
 HORATIO Then thus begin our wars: put forth thy  
     hand,  
     That it may combat with my ruder hand.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Set forth thy foot to try the push of  
     mine.  
 HORATIO But first my looks shall combat against thine.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Then ward thyself: I dart this kiss at thee. 40  
 HORATIO Thus I retort the dart thou threw'st at me.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Nay then, to gain the glory of the field,  
     My twining arms shall yoke and make thee yield.  
 HORATIO Nay then, my arms are large and strong  
     withal:  
     Thus elms by vines are compassed till they fall.  
 BEL-IMPERIA O let me go, for in my troubled eyes  
     Now may'st thou read that life in passion dies.  
 HORATIO O stay a while and I will die with thee,  
     So shalt thou yield and yet have conquered me.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Who's there? Pedringano! We are  
     betrayed! 50

*Enter* LORENZO, BALTHAZAR, SERBERINE, PEDRINGANO,  
*disguised*

- 
- 23 asketh: requires, demands  
 25 Flora: the Roman goddess of flowers  
 28 record: sing  
 30 counterfeits: imitates  
 31 frame: compose  
 34 Venus . . . Mars: Venus (Aphrodite) betrayed her  
     husband Hephaestus having fallen in love with Mars  
     (Ares) the god of war  
 37 ruder: rougher, coarser  
 40 ward: shield, guard  
 43 yoke: join  
 45 Edwards notes that Horatio inverts the traditional notion  
     that the vine (associated with Venus) held up the elm  
     even after the elm was dead. Here the vine pulls down  
     the elm  
 48 die: an Elizabethan term for orgasm. Mulryne suggests  
     that this double meaning emphasises the extreme  
     sensuality of the scene

LORENZO My lord, away with her, take her aside.  
 O sir, forbear, your valour is already tried.  
 Quickly despatch, my masters.

*They hang him in the arbour*

HORATIO What, will you murder me?  
 LORENZO Ay, thus, and thus; these are the fruits of  
     love. *They stab him*  
 BEL-IMPERIA O save his life and let me die for him!  
 O save him, brother, save him, Balthazar:  
 I loved Horatio, but he loved not me.  
 BALTHAZAR But Balthazar loves Bel-imperia. 59  
 LORENZO Although his life were still ambitious proud,  
 Yet is he at the highest now he is dead.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Murder! Murder! Help, Hieronimo,  
     help!  
 LORENZO Come, stop her mouth, away with her.  
     *Exeunt, leaving HORATIO's body*

## Act II, scene v

*Enter* HIERONIMO *in his shirt, etc.*

HIERONIMO What outcries pluck me from my naked  
     bed,  
 And chill my throbbing heart with trembling fear,  
 Which never danger yet could daunt before?  
 Who calls Hieronimo? Speak, here I am.  
 I did not slumber, therefore 'twas no dream,  
 No, no, it was some woman cried for help,  
 And here within this garden did she cry,  
 And in this garden must I rescue her.  
 But stay, what murderous spectacle is this?  
 A man hanged up and all the murderers gone, 10  
 And in my bower, to lay the guilt on me.  
 This place was made for pleasure not for death.  
     *He cuts him down*  
 Those garments that he wears I oft have seen—  
 Alas, it is Horatio, my sweet son!  
 Oh no, but he that whilom was my son.  
 O was it thou that calledst me from my bed?  
 O speak, if any spark of life remain:  
 I am thy father. Who hath slain my son?  
 What savage monster, not of human kind,  
 Hath here been glutted with thy harmless blood, 20

- 
- 52 tried: as in 'tried and tested', referring to Horatio's  
     military reputation  
 60 ambitious proud: ambitious in seeking to satisfy his pride  
 61 highest now he is dead: a bleak joke at Horatio's expense  
     since he is now hanging on a tree (according to  
     Hieronimo in Act IV). Most editors assume that the tree  
     is part of the arbour  
 SD *shirt*: nightshirt  
 1 naked bed: a proverbial usage. The sleeper is naked, or  
     not fully dressed  
 15 whilom: was once

And left thy bloody corpse dishonoured here,  
 For me, amidst this dark and deathful shades,  
 To drown thee with an ocean of my tears?  
 O heavens, why made you night to cover sin?  
 By day this deed of darkness had not been.  
 O earth, why didst thou not in time devour  
 The vild profaner of this sacred bower?  
 O poor Horatio, what hadst thou misdone,  
 To leese thy life ere life was new begun?  
 O wicked butcher, whatsoe'er thou wert,  
 How could thou strangle virtue and desert?  
 Ay me most wretched, that have lost my joy,  
 In leeing my Horatio, my sweet boy!

*Enter ISABELLA*

ISABELLA My husband's absence makes my heart to  
 throb—

Hieronimo!

HIERONIMO Here, Isabella, help me to lament,  
 For sighs are stopped and all my tears are lost.

ISABELLA What world of grief! My son Horatio!  
 O where's the author of this endless woe?

HIERONIMO To know the author were some ease of  
 grief,

For in revenge my heart would find relief.

ISABELLA Then is he gone? And is my son gone too?

O, gush out, tears, fountains and floods of tears;  
 Blow, sighs, and raise an everlasting storm:  
 For outrage fits our cursed wretchedness.

HIERONIMO Sweet lovely rose, ill plucked before thy  
 time,

Fair worthy son, not conquered, but betrayed:  
 I'll kiss thee now, for words with tears are stayed.

ISABELLA And I'll close up the glasses of his sight,  
 For once these eyes were only my delight.

HIERONIMO See'st thou this handkercher besmeared  
 with blood?

It shall not from me till I take revenge.  
 See'st thou those wounds that yet are bleeding fresh?  
 I'll not entomb them till I have revenged.  
 Then will I joy amidst my discontent,  
 Till then my sorrow never shall be spent.

21 dishonoured: Kinney suggests a) disgraced; b) violated  
 22 this: some editors amend to 'these', but others note that  
 this was an acceptable plural form for the time  
 26 in time: at the appropriate time  
 27 vild: vile  
 29 leese: lose  
 life was new begun: Horatio should have been entering a  
 new life now that the war was over  
 33 leeing: losing  
 39 the author of: the one responsible for  
 45 outrage: passionate behaviour  
 49 glasses of his sight: his eyes  
 51 handkercher: handkerchief or small scarf

ISABELLA The heavens are just, murder cannot be hid:  
 Time is the author both of truth and right,  
 And time will bring this treachery to light.

HIERONIMO Meanwhile, good Isabella, cease thy  
 plaints, 60

Or at the least dissemble them awhile:  
 So shall we sooner find the practice out,  
 And learn by whom all this was brought about.  
 Come Isabel, now let us take him up,

*They take him up*

30

And bear him in from out this cursed place.  
 I'll say his dirge, singing fits not this case.

*O aliquis mihi quas pulchrum ver educat herbas*

HIERONIMO sets his breast unto his sword

*Misceat, et nostro detur medicina dolori;*

*Aut, si qui faciunt animis oblivia, succos*

*Praebat; ipse metam magnum quaecunque per orbem* 70

*Gramina Sol pulchras effert in luminis oras;*

*Ipse bibam quicquid meditatur saga veneni;*

*Quicquid et herbarum vi caeca nenia neccit:*

*Omnia perpetiar, lethum quoque, dum semel omnis*

*Noster in extincto moriatur pectore sensus.*

*Ergo tuos oculos nunquam, mea vita, videbo,*

*Et tua perpetuus sepelivit lumina somnus?*

*Emoriar tecum: sic, sic juvat ire sub umbras.*

*At tamen absistam properato cedere letho,*

*Ne mortem vindicta tuam tum nulla sequatur.* 80

*Here he throws it from him and bears the body away*

## Act II, scene vi

ANDREA Brought'st thou me hither to increase my pain?  
 I looked that Balthazar should have been slain;

60 plaints: sorrows

61 dissemble: disguise them or hold them back

62 find the practice out: discover the detail of the plot

66 dirge: funeral song

67–80 *O aliquis . . . nulla sequatur*: 'Let someone mix for me  
 the herbs which beautiful spring fosters, and let a salve be  
 given for our grief; or let him apply juices, if there are any  
 that bring oblivion to men's minds. I myself shall gather  
 anywhere in the great world whatever plants the sun  
 draws forth into the fair regions of light; I myself shall  
 drink whatever drug the wise-woman devises, and  
 whatever herbs incantation assembles by its secret power.  
 I shall face all things, death even, until the moment our  
 every feeling dies in this dead breast. And so shall I never  
 again, my life, see those eyes of yours, and has everlasting  
 slumber sealed up your light of life? I shall perish with  
 you; thus, thus would it please me to go to the shades  
 below. But nonetheless I shall keep myself from yielding  
 to a hasty death, in case then no revenge should follow  
 your death.' Kyd combines his own lines with others  
 taken from the classical writers Lucretius, Ovid and  
 Virgil

2 looked: expected, hoped

But 'tis my friend Horatio that is slain,  
 And they abuse fair Bel-imperia,  
 On whom I doted more than all the world,  
 Because she loved me more than all the world.  
 REVENGE Thou talk'st of harvest when the corn is  
 green:  
 The end is crown of every work well done;  
 The sickle comes not till the corn be ripe.  
 Be still, and ere I lead thee from this place,  
 I'll show thee Balthazar in heavy case.

### Act III, scene i

*Enter VICEROY OF PORTINGALE, Nobles, VILLUPPO*

VICEROY Infortunate condition of kings,  
 Seated amidst so many helpless doubts!  
 First we are placed upon extremest height,  
 And oft supplanted with exceeding heat,  
 But ever subject to the wheel of chance;  
 And at our highest never joy we so,  
 As we both doubt and dread our overthrow.  
 So striveth not the waves with sundry winds  
 As Fortune toileth in the affairs of kings,  
 That would be feared, yet fear to be beloved,  
 Sith fear or love to kings is flattery.  
 For instance, Lordings, look upon your king,  
 By hate deprived of his dearest son,  
 The only hope of our successive line.  
 I NOBLEMAN I had not thought that Alexandro's heart  
 Had been envenomed with such extreme hate:  
 But now I see that words have several works,  
 And there's no credit in the countenance.  
 VILLUPPO No, for, my lord, had you beheld the train  
 That feigned love had coloured in his looks,

9 sickle: an instrument of harvest but also with a connotation of death, as with the scythe  
 11 heavy case: in a sad state  
 1 Infortunate: unfortunate  
 2 Seated: placed  
 helpless: beyond help  
 doubts: fears  
 4 heat: fury  
 5 the wheel of chance: a common image describing rising and falling fortune, especially in political terms  
 7 doubt: suspect  
 10 That would be feared: that would wish to be feared  
 11 Sith: since  
 12 Lordings: Lords  
 14 successive line: line of succession  
 17 words . . . works: words do not always represent actual deeds  
 18 credit . . . countenance: a person's outward show (face) does not necessarily reflect intention  
 19 train: treachery  
 20 coloured: disguised

When he in camp consorted Balthazar,  
 Far more inconstant had you thought the sun,  
 That hourly coasts the centre of the earth,  
 Than Alexandro's purpose to the prince.  
 VICEROY No more, Villuppo, thou hast said enough,  
 And with thy words thou slay'st our wounded  
 thoughts.  
 Nor shall I longer dally with the world,  
 Procrastinating Alexandro's death:  
 Go some of you and fetch the traitor forth,  
 That as he is condemned he may die.

*Enter ALEXANDRO with a Nobleman and Halberts*

2 NOBLEMAN In such extremes will naught but patience  
 serve.  
 ALEXANDRO But in extremes what patience shall I use?  
 Nor discontents it me to leave the world  
 With whom there nothing can prevail but wrong.  
 2 NOBLEMAN Yet hope the best.  
 ALEXANDRO 'Tis Heaven is my hope.  
 As for the earth, it is too much infect  
 To yield me hope of any of her mould.  
 VICEROY Why linger ye? Bring forth that daring fiend,  
 And let him die for his accursed deed.  
 10 ALEXANDRO Not that I fear the extremity of death, 40  
 For nobles cannot stoop to servile fear,  
 Do I, O king, thus discontented live.  
 But this, O this, torments my labouring soul,  
 That thus I die suspected of a sin,  
 Whereof, as heavens have known my secret thoughts,  
 So am I free from this suggestion.  
 VICEROY No more, I say! To the tortures! When!  
 Bind him, and burn his body in those flames,  
*They bind him to the stake*  
 That shall prefigure those unquenched fires  
 Of Phlegethon prepared for his soul. 50  
 ALEXANDRO My guiltless death will be avenged on thee,  
 On thee, Villuppo, that hath maliced thus,  
 Or for thy meed hast falsely me accused.

21 consorted: kept company with  
 23 hourly coasts . . . the earth: refers to the belief that the earth was the centre of the universe, thus a symbol of constancy  
 24 purpose: attitude  
 SD *Halberts*: halberdiers  
 32-4 Alexandro's distress anticipates Hieronimo's in the next scene  
 34 With whom . . . but wrong: all I ever see is injustice  
 36 infect: infected  
 37 any of her mould: anyone born there  
 46 suggestion: false accusation  
 47 When!: exclamation of impatience  
 50 Phlegethon: the river of fire in Hades, the classical Hell  
 52 maliced: behaved maliciously  
 53 meed: advantage

VILLUPPO Nay, Alexandro, if thou menace me,  
I'll lend a hand to send thee to the lake  
Where those thy words shall perish with thy works,  
Injurious traitor, monstrous homicide!

*Enter* AMBASSADOR

AMBASSADOR Stay, hold a while,  
And here, with pardon of his majesty,  
Lay hands upon Villuppo.

VICEROY Ambassador, 60  
What news hath urged this sudden entrance?

AMBASSADOR Know, sovereign lord, that Balthazar  
doth live.

VICEROY What say'st thou? Liveth Balthazar our son?

AMBASSADOR Your highness' son, Lord Balthazar, doth  
live;

And, well entreated in the court of Spain,  
Humbly commends him to your majesty.  
These eyes beheld, and these my followers;  
With these, the letters of the king's commends,  
*Gives him letters*  
Are happy witnesses of his highness' health.

*The VICEROY looks on the letters, and proceeds*

VICEROY (*Reads*) 'Thy son doth live, your tribute is  
received, 70

Thy peace is made, and we are satisfied.  
The rest resolve upon as things proposed  
For both our honours and thy benefit.'

AMBASSADOR These are his highness' farther articles.  
*He gives him more letters*

VICEROY Accursed wretch, to intimate these ills  
Against the life and reputation  
Of noble Alexandro! Come, my lord,  
Let him unbind thee that is bound to death,  
To make a quit for thy discontent.

*They unbind him*

ALEXANDRO Dread lord, in kindness you could do no  
less, 80

Upon report of such a damned fact.  
But thus we see our innocence hath saved  
The hopeless life which thou, Villuppo, sought  
By thy suggestions to have massacred.

VICEROY Say, false Villuppo, wherefore didst thou thus  
Falsely betray Lord Alexandro's life?  
Him, whom thou knowest that no unkindness else,  
But even the slaughter of our dearest son,

Could once have moved us to have misconceived.  
ALEXANDRO Say, treacherous Villuppo, tell the king, 90  
Wherein hath Alexandro used thee ill?

VILLUPPO Rent with remembrance of so foul a deed,  
My guilty soul submits me to thy doom:  
For, not for Alexandro's injuries,  
But for reward and hope to be preferred,  
Thus have I shamelessly hazarded his life.

VICEROY Which, villain, shall be ransomed with thy  
death,

And not so mean a torment as we here  
Devised for him who thou said'st slew our son,  
But with the bitterest torments and extremes 100  
That may be yet invented for thine end.

*Alexandro seems to entreat*

Entreat me not, go, take the traitor hence.

*Exit VILLUPPO guarded*

And, Alexandro, let us honour thee  
With public notice of thy loyalty.  
To end those things articulated here  
By our great lord, the mighty King of Spain,  
We with our Council will deliberate.  
Come, Alexandro, keep us company.

*Exeunt*

## Act III, scene ii

*Enter* HIERONIMO

HIERONIMO O eyes, no eyes, but fountains fraught  
with tears;  
O life, no life, but lively form of death;  
O world, no world, but mass of public wrongs,  
Confused and filled with murder and misdeeds!  
O sacred heavens! If this unhallowed deed,  
If this inhuman and barbarous attempt,  
If this incomparable murder thus  
Of mine, but now no more my son,  
Shall unrevealed and unrevenge pass,  
How should we term your dealings to be just, 10  
If you unjustly deal with those that in your justice  
trust?

The night, sad secretary to my moans,  
With direful visions wake my vexed soul,  
And with the wounds of my distressful son

89 misconceived: suspected

92 Rent: torn

97 ransomed: repaid

105 articulated here: expressed in the letter sent by the King  
of Spain

1 fraught: filled

2 lively form of death: death with the appearance of life

4 Confused: disordered

12 secretary: confidant

14 distressful: giving rise to distress

55 lake: the lake of Acheron in Hades, into which the  
Phlegethon flows

61 entrance: three syllables

66 commends him: sends greetings

79 quit: recompense

80 in kindness: naturally

81 fact: deed

84 suggestions: false accusations



Solicit me for notice of his death.  
 The ugly fiends do sally forth of hell,  
 And frame my steps to unfrequented paths,  
 And fear my heart with fierce inflamed thoughts.  
 The cloudy day my discontents records,  
 Early begins to register my dreams  
 And drive me forth to seek the murderer. 20  
 Eyes, life, world, heavens, hell, night, and day,  
 See, search, show, send some man, some mean, that  
 may— *A letter falleth*  
 What's here? A letter? Tush, it is not so!  
 A letter written to Hieronimo! *Red ink*  
 (*Reads*) 'For want of ink, receive this bloody writ.  
 Me hath my hapless brother hid from thee:  
 Revenge thyself on Balthazar and him,  
 For these were they that murderèd thy son.  
 Hieronimo, revenge Horatio's death,  
 And better fare than Bel-imperia doth.' 30  
 What means this unexpected miracle?  
 My son slain by Lorenzo and the prince!  
 What cause had they Horatio to malign?  
 Or what might move thee, Bel-imperia,  
 To accuse thy brother, had he been the mean?  
 Hieronimo, beware, thou art betrayed,  
 And to entrap thy life this train is laid.  
 Advise thee therefore, be not credulous:  
 This is devised to endanger thee,  
 That thou by this Lorenzo shouldst accuse,  
 And he, for thy dishonour done, should draw  
 Thy life in question, and thy name in hate.  
 Dear was the life of my beloved son,  
 And of his death behoves me be revenged:  
 Then hazard not thine own, Hieronimo,  
 But live t'effect thy resolution.  
 I therefore will by circumstances try  
 What I can gather to confirm this writ,  
 And, hearkening near the Duke of Castile's house, 50  
 Close if I can with Bel-imperia,  
 To listen more, but nothing to bewray.

18 fear: frighten

23 mean: method

SD *A letter falleth*: the sudden arrival of the letter indicates the way that circumstances, directed by Revenge, move towards the working-out of revenge

26 writ: document

27 hapless: luckless

34 malign: hate

36 mean: means

38 train: plot

42-3 should draw/Thy life in question: should endanger your life

47 resolution: resolve (to take revenge)

48 by circumstances: by gathering evidence

51 Close: meet or come to an understanding

52 bewray: disclose

*Enter PEDRINGANO*

Now Pedringano!

PEDRINGANO Now, Hieronimo!

HIERONIMO Where's thy lady?

PEDRINGANO I know not; here's my lord.

*Enter LORENZO*

LORENZO How now, who's this? Hieronimo?

HIERONIMO My lord.

PEDRINGANO He asketh for my lady Bel-imperia.

LORENZO What to do, Hieronimo? The duke my father  
 hath

Upon some disgrace awhile removed her hence;

But if it be aught I may inform her of,

Tell me, Hieronimo, and I'll let her know it. 60

HIERONIMO Nay, nay, my lord, I thank you, it shall not  
 need.

I had a suit unto her, but too late,

And her disgrace makes me unfortunate.

LORENZO Why so, Hieronimo? Use me.

HIERONIMO O no, my lord, I dare not, it must not be,

I humbly thank your lordship.

LORENZO Why then, farewell.

HIERONIMO My grief no heart, my thoughts no tongue  
 can tell. *Exit*

LORENZO Come hither, Pedringano, see'st thou this?

PEDRINGANO My lord, I see it, and suspect it too.

LORENZO This is that damned villain Serberine, 70

That hath, I fear, revealed Horatio's death.

PEDRINGANO My lord, he could not, 'twas so lately  
 done;

And since, he hath not left my company.

LORENZO Admit he have not, his condition's such,

As fear or flattering words may make him false.

I know his humour, and therewith repent

That e'er I used him in this enterprise.

But Pedringano, to prevent the worst,

And 'cause I know thee secret as my soul,

Here, for thy further satisfaction, take thou this, 80

*Gives him more gold*

And hearken to me. Thus it is devised:

This night thou must, and prithee so resolve,

Meet Serberine at Saint Luigi's Park—

Thou know'st 'tis here hard by behind the house.

There take thy stand, and see thou strike him sure,

For die he must, if we do mean to live.

PEDRINGANO But how shall Serberine be there, my lord?

LORENZO Let me alone, I'll send to him to meet

62 suit unto her: a request to make to her

74 condition's: disposition's

76 humour: temperament

79 secret: a) secretive; b) reliable

85 strike him sure: kill him

88 Let me alone: leave it to me

The prince and me, where thou must do this deed. 89  
 PEDRINGANO It shall be done, my lord, it shall be done,  
 And I'll go arm myself to meet him there.  
 LORENZO When things shall alter, as I hope they will,  
 Then shalt thou mount for this: thou know'st my  
 mind. *Exit* PEDRINGANO  
*Che le Ieron!*

*Enter* PAGE

PAGE My lord?  
 LORENZO Go, sirrah, to Serberine,  
 And bid him forthwith meet the prince and me  
 At Saint Luigi's Park, behind the house.  
 This evening, boy!  
 PAGE I go, my lord.  
 LORENZO But, sirrah, let the hour be eight o'clock.  
 Bid him not fail.

PAGE I fly, my lord. *Exit*  
 LORENZO Now to confirm the complot thou hast cast  
 Of all these practices, I'll spread the watch, 101  
 Upon precise commandment from the king,  
 Strongly to guard the place where Pedringano  
 This night shall murder hapless Serberine.  
 Thus must we work that will avoid distrust,  
 Thus must we practise to prevent mishap,  
 And thus one ill another must expulse.  
 This sly enquiry of Hieronimo  
 For Bel-imperia breeds suspicion,  
 And this suspicion bodes a further ill. 110  
 As for myself, I know my secret fault;  
 And so do they, but I have dealt for them.  
 They that for coin their souls endangered,  
 To save my life, for coin shall venture theirs:  
 And better it's that base companions die,  
 Than by their life to hazard our good haps.  
 Nor shall they live, for me to fear their faith:  
 I'll trust myself, myself shall be my friend,  
 For die they shall, slaves are ordained to no other end.  
*Exit*

93 mount: rise socially, but also an ironic joke about  
 'mounting' the scaffold

94 *Che le Ieron!*: the meaning is not clear. Possibly equivalent  
 to the Italian 'chi là' ('who's there?') with Ieron the name  
 of the page

100 complot: plot  
 cast: devised

101 practices: deceits  
 spread the watch: position the constables

107 expulse: expel

113 for coin: for money (as reward)

115 base companions: low-bred fellow conspirators

116 good haps: good fortune

119 slaves: another contemptuous term for his low-bred  
 associates

## Act III, scene iii

*Enter* PEDRINGANO *with a pistol*

PEDRINGANO Now, Pedringano, bid thy pistol hold;  
 And hold on, Fortune! Once more favour me;  
 Give but success to mine attempting spirit,  
 And let me shift for taking of mine aim!  
 Here is the gold, this is the gold proposed:  
 It is no dream that I adventure for,  
 But Pedringano is possessed thereof.  
 And he that would not strain his conscience  
 For him that thus his liberal purse hath stretched,  
 Unworthy such a favour may he fail, 10  
 And, wishing, want, when such as I prevail.  
 As for the fear of apprehension,  
 I know, if need should be, my noble lord  
 Will stand between me and ensuing harms;  
 Besides, this place is free from all suspect.  
 Here therefore will I stay and take my stand.

*Enter the* WATCH

1 WATCH I wonder much to what intent it is  
 That we are thus expressly charged to watch.  
 2 WATCH 'Tis by commandment in the king's own  
 name. 19  
 3 WATCH But we were never wont to watch and ward  
 So near the duke his brother's house before.  
 2 WATCH Content yourself, stand close, there's  
 somewhat in't.

*Enter* SERBERINE

SERBERINE Here, Serberine, attend and stay thy pace,  
 For here did Don Lorenzo's page appoint  
 That thou by his command shouldst meet with him.  
 How fit a place, if one were so disposed,  
 Methinks this corner is, to close with one.  
 PEDRINGANO Here comes the bird that I must seize  
 upon;  
 Now, Pedringano, or never, play the man!  
 SERBERINE I wonder that his lordship stays so long, 30  
 Or wherefore should he send for me so late?  
 PEDRINGANO For this, Serberine, and thou shalt ha't.  
*Shoots the dag*

So, there he lies, my promise is performed.

*The* WATCH *coming forward*

1 hold: function properly  
 4 let me shift: leave it (the taking of aim) to me  
 10 fail: a) be unsuccessful; b) fall into poverty  
 15 suspect: suspicion  
 20 wont to watch and ward: accustomed to keep guard  
 22 close: a) close; b) concealed  
 23 stay thy pace: stop walking  
 27 close: grapple  
 SD *dag*: a heavy pistol



To stand good lord and help him in distress.  
 Tell him I have his letters, know his mind,  
 And what we may, let him assure him of.  
 Fellow, begone: my boy shall follow thee.

*Exit* MESSENGER

This works like wax; yet once more try thy wits. **60**  
 Boy, go convey this purse to Pedringano,  
 Thou knowest the prison, closely give it him,  
 And be advised that none be there about.  
 Bid him be merry still, but secret;  
 And though the Marshal-Sessions be today,  
 Bid him not doubt of his delivery.  
 Tell him his pardon is already signed,  
 And thereon bid him boldly be resolved;  
 For, were he ready to be turned off  
 (As 'tis my will the uttermost be tried) **70**  
 Thou with his pardon shalt attend him still.  
 Show him this box, tell him his pardon's in't,  
 But open't not, and if thou lov'st thy life,  
 But let him wisely keep his hopes unknown;  
 He shall not want while Don Lorenzo lives.  
 Away!

PAGE I go my lord, I run.

LORENZO But sirrah, see that this be cleanly done.

*Exit* PAGE

Now stands our fortune on a tickle point,  
 And now or never ends Lorenzo's doubts.  
 One only thing is uneffected yet,  
 And that's to see the executioner.  
 But to what end? I list not trust the air  
 With utterance of our pretence therein,  
 For fear the privy whispering of the wind  
 Convey our words amongst unfriendly ears,  
 That lie too open to advantages.  
*E quel che voglio io, nessun lo sa,*  
*Intendo io: quel mi basterà.*

- 56 stand good lord: act as a good lord and his protector  
 60 works like wax: smoothly goes the way I intended  
 62 closely: secretly  
 63 be advised: be careful  
 64 secret: silent  
 68 boldly be resolved: feel confident  
 69 turned off: hanged  
 77 cleanly: efficiently  
 78 tickle: precarious  
 79 doubts: fears  
 82 list not: have no wish to  
 83 pretence: intention  
 84 privy: private  
 86 advantages: getting the upper hand  
 87-8 *E quel . . . mi basterà*: 'And what I want, no one knows; I understand and that is enough for me' (Italian)

## Act III, scene v

*Enter* BOY *with the box*

PAGE My master hath forbidden me to look in this box,  
 and by my troth 'tis likely, if he had not warned me, I  
 should not have had so much idle time; for we men's-  
 kind in our minority are like women in their  
 uncertainty: that they are most forbidden, they will  
 soonest attempt. So I now. By my bare honesty,  
 here's nothing but the bare empty box. Were it not  
 sin against secrecy, I would say it were a piece of  
 gentleman-like knavery. I must go to Pedringano,  
 and tell him his pardon is in this box; nay, I would  
 have sworn it, had I not seen the contrary. I cannot  
 choose but smile to think how the villain will flout  
 the gallows, scorn the audience, and descant on the  
 hangman, and all presuming of his pardon from  
 hence. Will't not be an odd jest, for me to stand and  
 grace every jest he makes, pointing my finger at this  
 box, as who would say, 'mock on, here's thy warrant.'  
 Is't not a scurvy jest, that a man should jest himself to  
 death? Alas, poor Pedringano, I am in a sort sorry for  
 thee, but if I should be hanged with thee, I cannot  
 weep. **21**

*Exit*

## 80 Act III, scene vi

*Enter* HIERONIMO *and the* DEPUTY

HIERONIMO Thus must we toil in other men's  
 extremes,  
 That know not how to remedy our own;  
 And do them justice, when unjustly we,  
 For all our wrongs, can compass no redress.  
 But shall I never live to see the day  
 That I may come, by justice of the heavens,  
 To know the cause that may my cares allay?  
 This toils my body, this consumeth age,  
 That only I to all men just must be,

*Exit*

- SD *the box* is possibly meant to be associated with Pandora's  
 box in which only hope was left when all human  
 qualities, both good and ill, had vanished  
 2 by my troth: by my truth, an oath  
 4 minority: boyhood  
 5 uncertainty: fearfulness  
 13 descant: hold forth about  
 18 scurvy: bitter  
 SD DEPUTY: the assistant to the Knight Marshal  
 1-10 Hieronimo's concern here is with justice rather than  
 simple revenge  
 1 extremes: difficulties  
 4 compass: locate  
 8 toils: burdens  
 consumeth age: uses up my life

And neither gods nor men be just to me.  
 DEPUTY Worthy Hieronimo, your office asks  
 A care to punish such as do transgress.  
 HIERONIMO So is't my duty to regard his death  
 Who, when he lived, deserved my dearest blood.  
 But come, for that we came for, let's begin,  
 For here lies that which bids me to be gone.

*Enter OFFICERS, BOY, and PEDRINGANO, with a letter in his hand, bound*

DEPUTY Bring forth the prisoner, for the court is set.  
 PEDRINGANO Gramercy, boy, but it was time to come;  
 For I had written to my lord anew  
 A nearer matter that concerneth him,  
 For fear his lordship had forgotten me.  
 But sith he hath remembered me so well—  
 Come, come, come on, when shall we to this gear?  
 HIERONIMO Stand forth, thou monster, murderer of  
 men,  
 And here, for satisfaction of the world,  
 Confess thy folly and repent thy fault,  
 For there's thy place of execution.  
 PEDRINGANO This is short work! Well, to your  
 marshalship  
 First I confess, nor fear I death therefore,  
 I am the man, 'twas I slew Serberine.  
 But sir, then you think this shall be the place  
 Where we shall satisfy you for this gear?  
 DEPUTY Ay, Pedringano.  
 PEDRINGANO Now I think not so.  
 HIERONIMO Peace, impudent, for thou shalt find it so:  
 For blood with blood shall, while I sit as judge,  
 Be satisfied, and the law discharged.  
 And though myself cannot receive the like,  
 Yet will I see that others have their right.  
 Despatch, the fault's approved and confessed,  
 And by our law he is condemned to die.  
 HANGMAN Come on sir, are you ready?  
 PEDRINGANO To do what, my fine officious knave?  
 HANGMAN To go to this gear.  
 PEDRINGANO O sir, you are too forward; thou wouldst  
 fain furnish me with a halter, to disfurnish me of my  
 habit. So I should go out of this gear, my raiment,

13 regard: concern myself with  
 14 dearest blood: utmost loyalty  
 18 Gramercy: an expression of relief  
 20 nearer: more serious  
 23 gear: business  
 32 gear: deed, behaviour  
 39 approved: proved  
 43 this gear: the gallows  
 44 forward: presumptuous  
 45 halter: noose  
 disfurnish . . . habit: referring to the custom which grants  
 the executioner his victim's clothes or habit

10 into that gear, the rope. But, hangman, now I spy  
 your knavery, I'll not change without boot, that's flat.  
 HANGMAN Come sir.  
 PEDRINGANO So then, I must up? 50  
 HANGMAN No remedy.  
 PEDRINGANO Yes, but there shall be for my coming  
 down.  
 HANGMAN Indeed, here's a remedy for that.  
 PEDRINGANO How? Be turned off?  
 HANGMAN Ay, truly; come, are you ready? I pray, sir,  
 despatch, the day goes away.  
 PEDRINGANO What, do you hang by the hour? If you  
 do, I may chance to break your old custom.  
 HANGMAN Faith, you have reason, for I am like to  
 break your young neck. 61  
 PEDRINGANO Dost thou mock me, hangman? Pray  
 God I be not preserved to break your knave's pate for  
 this.  
 HANGMAN Alas, sir, you are a foot too low to reach it,  
 and I hope you will never grow so high while I am in  
 the office.  
 PEDRINGANO Sirrah, dost see yonder boy with the box  
 in his hand?  
 HANGMAN What, he that points to it with his finger?  
 PEDRINGANO Ay, that companion. 71  
 HANGMAN I know him not, but what of him?  
 PEDRINGANO Dost thou think to live till his old  
 doublet will make thee a new truss?  
 HANGMAN Ay, and many a fair year after, to truss up  
 many an honest man than either thou or he.  
 PEDRINGANO What hath he in his box, as thou  
 think'st?  
 HANGMAN Faith, I cannot tell, nor I care not greatly.  
 Methinks you should rather hearken to your soul's  
 health. 81  
 PEDRINGANO Why, sirrah hangman, I take it, that that  
 is good for the body is likewise good for the soul; and  
 it may be, in that box is balm for both.  
 HANGMAN Well, thou art even the merriest piece of  
 man's flesh that e'er groaned at my office door.  
 PEDRINGANO Is your roguery become an 'office' with a  
 knave's name?  
 HANGMAN Ay, and that shall all they witness that see  
 you seal it with a thief's name. 90

48 boot: compensation  
 55 turned off: hanged (pushed off the support)  
 57 despatch: 'let's get to work'  
 58 by the hour: at set times or at an hourly rate  
 63 pate: head  
 71 companion: fellow  
 74 truss: close-fitting garment  
 75 truss up: hang  
 80 hearken: to pay attention to  
 87 'office': Pedringano mocks the hangman's high notion of  
 his profession

PEDRINGANO I prithee, request this good company to pray with me.

HANGMAN Ay marry sir, this is a good motion; my masters, you see here's a good fellow.

PEDRINGANO Nay, nay, now I remember me, let them alone till some other time, for now I have no great need.

HIERONIMO I have not seen a wretch so impudent!  
O monstrous times, where murder's set so light; **99**  
And where the soul that should be shrined in heaven,  
Solely delights in interdicted things,  
Still wandering in the thorny passages  
That intercepts itself of happiness.  
Murder, O bloody monster. God forbid  
A fault so foul should 'scape unpunished.  
Despatch and see this execution done—  
This makes me to remember thee, my son.

*Exit* HIERONIMO

PEDRINGANO Nay soft, no haste.

DEPUTY Why, wherefore stay you? Have you hope of life? **110**

PEDRINGANO Why, ay.

HANGMAN As how?

PEDRINGANO Why, rascal, by my pardon from the king.

HANGMAN Stand you on that? Then you shall off with this. *He turns him off*

DEPUTY So, executioner. Convey him hence,  
But let his body be unburied:  
Let not the earth be choked or infect **119**  
With that which heaven contemns, and men neglect.  
*Exeunt*

## Act III, scene vii

*Enter* HIERONIMO

HIERONIMO Where shall I run to breathe abroad my woes,  
My woes, whose weight hath wearied the earth?  
Or mine exclaims, that have surcharged the air  
With ceaseless plaints for my deceased son?  
The blustering winds, conspiring with my words,  
At my lament have moved the leafless trees,  
Disrobbed the meadows of their flowered green,  
Made mountains marsh with spring-tides of my tears,  
And broken through the brazen gates of hell.

93 motion: idea

101 inderdicted: prohibited

102 Still: forever

108 soft: wait a moment

115 Stand: rely

1 breathe abroad: give expression to

3 exclaims: cries

Yet still tormented is my tortured soul **10**  
With broken sighs and restless passions,  
That winged mount, and hovering in the air,  
Beat at the windows of the brightest heavens,  
Soliciting for justice and revenge;  
But they are placed in those empyreal heights,  
Where, counter-mured with walls of diamond,  
I find the place impregnable; and they  
Resist my woes, and give my words no way.

*Enter* HANGMAN *with a letter*

HANGMAN O lord sir, God bless you sir, the man sir,  
Petergade sir, he that was so full of merry conceits—  
HIERONIMO Well, what of him? **21**

HANGMAN O lord sir, he went the wrong way, the fellow had a fair commission to the contrary. Sir, here is his passport I pray you sir, we have done him wrong.

HIERONIMO I warrant thee, give it me.

HANGMAN You will stand between the gallows and me?

HIERONIMO Ay, ay.

HANGMAN I thank your Lord Worship.

*Exit* HANGMAN

HIERONIMO And yet, though somewhat nearer me concerns, **30**

I will, to ease the grief that I sustain,  
Take truce with sorrow while I read on this.  
'My lord, I writ as mine extremes required,  
That you would labour my delivery;  
If you neglect, my life is desperate,  
And in my death I shall reveal the troth.  
You know, my lord, I slew him for your sake;  
And as confederate with the prince and you,  
Won by rewards and hopeful promises,  
I help to murder Don Horatio too.' **40**  
Help he to murder mine Horatio?  
And actors in th'accursed tragedy  
Wast thou, Lorenzo, Balthazar and thou,  
Of whom my son, my son deserved so well?  
What have I heard, what have mine eyes beheld?  
O sacred heavens, may it come to pass  
That such a monstrous and detested deed,  
So closely smothered, and so long concealed,

11 passions: sufferings

15 empyreal: heavenly

16 counter-mured: doubly-walled as in a castle with concentric walls

20 Petergade: this is as near as the hangman can get to 'Pedringano'  
conceits: jests

23 fair commission: written authority

33 writ: Q has 'write' but editors agree that the past tense is correct. Pedringano refers to the earlier letter  
extremes: predicament

48 closely smothered: kept secret

Shall thus by this be vengèd or revealed!  
 Now see I what I durst not then suspect,  
 That Bel-imperia's letter was not feigned.  
 Nor feigned she, though falsely they have wronged  
 Both her, myself, Horatio and themselves.  
 Now may I make compare, 'twixt hers and this,  
 Of every accident; I ne'er could find  
 Till now, and now I feelingly perceive,  
 They did what heaven unpunished would not leave.  
 O false Lorenzo, are these thy flattering looks?  
 Is this the honour that thou didst my son?  
 And Balthazar, bane to thy soul and me,  
 Was this the ransom he reserved thee for?  
 Woe to the cause of these constrained wars,  
 Woe to thy baseness and captivity,  
 Woe to thy birth, thy body and thy soul,  
 Thy cursed father, and thy conquered self!  
 And banned with bitter execrations be  
 The day and place where he did pity thee!  
 But wherefore waste I mine unfruitful words,  
 When naught but blood will satisfy my woes?  
 I will go plain me to my lord the king,  
 And cry aloud for justice through the court,  
 Wearing the flints with these my withered feet,  
 And either purchase justice by entreats  
 Or tire them all with my revenging threats.

50

60

70

*Exit*

Ah, but none of them will purge the heart:  
 No there's no medicine left for my disease,  
 Nor any physic to recure the dead. *She runs lunatic*  
 Horatio! O, where's Horatio?

MAID Good madam, affright not thus yourself  
 With outrage for your son Horatio:  
 He sleeps in quiet in the Elysian fields.  
 ISABELLA Why, did I not give you gowns and goodly  
 things, 10

Bought you a whistle and a whipstalk too,  
 To be revenged on their villainies?

MAID Madam, these humours do torment my soul.  
 ISABELLA My soul! Poor soul, thou talks of things  
 Thou know'st not what—my soul hath silver wings,  
 That mounts me up unto the highest heavens;  
 To heaven, ay, there sits my Horatio,  
 Backed with a troop of fiery cherubins,  
 Dancing about his newly-healed wounds,  
 Singing sweet hymns and chanting heavenly notes,  
 Rare harmony to greet his innocence, 21

That died, ay died a mirror in our days.  
 But say, where shall I find the men, the murderers,  
 That slew Horatio? Whither shall I run  
 To find them out that murdered my son?

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene viii

*Enter ISABELLA and her Maid*

ISABELLA So that, you say, this herb will purge the eye,  
 And this the head?

51-2 That Bel-imperia's . . . feigned she: 'He is relieved of two doubts, whether or not Bel-imperia really wrote the letter, and if so whether or not she was telling the truth' (McIlwraith)

54-7 Now may . . . not leave: 'Now I can check on every happening, by using the two letters; I could never be sure till now – but I see very vividly – that they committed this crime which Heaven must and will punish' (Mulryne)

55 accident: occurrence, with reference to Horatio's death find: understand

62 constrained: forced

66 banned: cursed

70-4 I will . . . revenging threats: Hieronimo determines to seek 'official' justice (represented by the king) but this speech ominously foreshadows the inadequacy of this and the consequent impulse towards private revenge

SD *Enter ISABELLA and her Maid*: some editors have begun a new act at this point, thus giving *The Spanish Tragedy* the five-act format typical of plays of this period. However, this revision would mean that Act III would end without an exchange between Don Andrea and Revenge

1 purge: cleanse

### Act III, scene ix

BEL-IMPERIA *at a window*

BEL-IMPERIA What means this outrage that is offered me?

Why am I thus sequestered from the court?  
 No notice? Shall I not know the cause  
 Of this my secret and suspicious ills?  
 Accursed brother, unkind murderer,  
 Why bends thou thus thy mind to martyr me?  
 Hieronimo, why writ I of thy wrongs,  
 Or why art thou so slack in thy revenge?  
 Andrea, O Andrea, that thou sawest  
 Me for thy friend Horatio handled thus, 10  
 And him for me thus causeless murdered.  
 Well, force perforce, I must constrain myself

5 recure: restore to health

11 whipstalk: whip-handle

13 humours: passions

14-22 Isabella's speech here evokes a Christian afterlife which contrasts with the classical descriptions which have shaped the theology of the play to this point

21 to greet: to honour or celebrate (rather than to welcome)

22 mirror: model of excellence

2 sequestered: kept apart

3 No notice?: kept ignorant?

6 bends: directs

12 force perforce: of necessity

To patience, and apply me to the time,  
Till heaven, as I have hoped shall set me free.

*Enter* CHRISTOPHIL

CHRISTOPHIL Come, Madam Bel-imperia, this may  
not be.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene x

*Enter* LORENZO, BALTHAZAR, and the PAGE

LORENZO Boy, talk no further, thus far things go well.  
Thou art assured that thou sawest him dead?

PAGE Or else my lord I live not.

LORENZO That's enough.  
As for his resolution in his end,  
Leave that to him with whom he sojourns now.

Here, take my ring and give it Christophil,  
And bid him let my sister be enlarged,

And bring her hither straight.

*Exit* PAGE

This that I did was for a policy

To smooth and keep the murder secret,  
Which as a nine-days' wonder being o'erblown,  
My gentle sister will I now enlarge.

10

BALTHAZAR And time, Lorenzo, for my lord the duke,  
You heard, enquired for her yester-night.

LORENZO Why, and, my lord, I hope you heard me say  
Sufficient reason why she kept away.

But that's all one. My lord, you love her?

BALTHAZAR Ay.

LORENZO Then in your love beware, deal cunningly,

Salve all suspicions; only soothe me up;

And if she hap to stand on terms with us,

20

As for her sweetheart, and concealment so,

Jest with her gently: under feigned jest

Are things concealed that else would breed unrest.

But here she comes.

*Enter* BEL-IMPERIA

Now, sister—

BEL-IMPERIA Sister? No!

Thou art no brother, but an enemy,

Else wouldst thou not have used thy sister so:

First, to affright me with thy weapons drawn,

And with extremes abuse my company;  
And then to hurry me, like whirlwind's rage,  
Amidst a crew of thy confederates, 30

And clap me up where none might come at me,

Nor I at any, to reveal my wrongs.

What madding fury did possess thy wits?

Or wherein is't that I offended thee?

LORENZO Advise you better, Bel-imperia,

For I have done you no disparagement;

Unless, by more discretion than deserved,

I sought to save your honour and mine own.

BEL-IMPERIA Mine honour! Why, Lorenzo, wherein  
is't

That I neglect my reputation so,

40

As you, or any, need to rescue it?

LORENZO His highness and my father were resolved

To come confer with old Hieronimo,

Concerning certain matters of estate,

That by the viceroy was determined.

BEL-IMPERIA And wherein was mine honour touched  
in that?

BALTHAZAR Have patience, Bel-imperia; hear the rest.

LORENZO Me next in sight as messenger they sent,

To give him notice that they were so nigh:

Now when I came, consorted with the prince 50

And unexpected, in an arbour there,

Found Bel-imperia with Horatio—

BEL-IMPERIA How then?

LORENZO Why then, remembering that old disgrace,

Which you for Don Andrea had endured,

And now were likely longer to sustain,

By being found so meanly accompanied,

Thought rather, for I knew no readier mean,

To thrust Horatio forth my father's way. 59

BALTHAZAR And carry you obscurely somewhere else,

Lest that his highness should have found you there.

BEL-IMPERIA Even so, my lord? And you are witness

That this is true which he entreateth of?

You, gentle brother, forged this for my sake,

And you, my lord, were made his instrument:

A work of worth, worthy the noting too!

31 clap me up: lock me up

36 disparagement: dishonour

37 Unless, by . . . than deserved: 'unless it were that, showing more concern and foresight than you deserved' (Mulryne)

44 Concerning certain matters of estate: 'concerning certain matters about possessions which the viceroy had given up' (Edwards), although Mulryne notes that 'matters of estate' could mean 'matters of importance' or 'state-matters'

48 next in sight: standing nearby

57 meanly accompanied: one of a number of references throughout the play to Horatio's social inferiority

64 forged this: devised and carried through this action

13 apply me to the time: accept the situation  
4 resolution: courage  
7 enlarged: set free  
9 policy: strategem  
10 smooth: avoid consequences  
19 Salve: again, smooth over the situation (as in a healing balm)  
soothe me up: agree with me  
20 stand on terms with us: be difficult, try to make conditions



But what's the cause that you concealed me since?  
 LORENZO Your melancholy, sister, since the news  
 Of your first favourite Don Andrea's death,  
 My father's old wrath hath exasperate.  
 BALTHAZAR And better was't for you, being in  
 disgrace,  
 To absent yourself, and give his fury place.  
 BEL-IMPERIA But why had I no notice of his ire?  
 LORENZO That were to add more fuel to your fire,  
 Who burnt like Aetna for Andrea's loss.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Hath not my father then enquired for  
 me?  
 LORENZO Sister, he hath, and thus excused I thee.  
*He whispereth in her ear*

But, Bel-imperia, see the gentle prince;  
 Look on thy love, behold young Balthazar,  
 Whose passions by thy presence are increased;  
 And in whose melancholy thou may'st see  
 Thy hate, his love; thy flight, his following thee.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Brother, you are become an orator—  
 I know not, I, by what experience—  
 Too politic for me, past all compare,  
 Since last I saw you; but content yourself,  
 The prince is meditating higher things.  
 BALTHAZAR 'Tis of thy beauty, then, that conquers  
 kings;  
 Of those thy tresses, Ariadne's twines,  
 Wherewith my liberty thou hast surprised;  
 Of that thine ivory front, my sorrow's map,  
 Wherein I see no haven to rest my hope.  
 BEL-IMPERIA To love and fear, and both at once, my  
 lord,  
 In my conceit, are things of more import  
 Than women's wits are to be busied with.  
 BALTHAZAR 'Tis I that love.  
 BEL-IMPERIA Whom?  
 BALTHAZAR Bel-imperia.  
 BEL-IMPERIA But I that fear.  
 BALTHAZAR Whom?  
 BEL-IMPERIA Bel-imperia.  
 LORENZO Fear yourself?  
 BEL-IMPERIA Ay, brother.

70 exasperate: heightened, made worse  
 72 give his fury place: let his anger burn itself out  
 75 Aetna: the volcano in Sicily  
 89 Ariadne's twines: in classical mythology Ariadne guided  
 Theseus through the labyrinth using a thread, but Kyd  
 may have confused Ariadne with Arachne, the Lydian  
 weaver who was changed into a spider by Athene.  
 Whatever the case, Balthazar means that Bel-imperia has  
 metaphorically entangled him in the twines of her hair,  
 an expression of her beauty  
 90 surprised: captured  
 91 front: forehead  
 94 In my conceit: to my mind

LORENZO How?  
 BEL-IMPERIA As those  
 That what they love are loath and fear to lose. 99  
 BALTHAZAR Then, fair, let Balthazar your keeper be.  
 BEL-IMPERIA No, Balthazar doth fear as well as we:  
*Et tremulo metui pavidum junxere timorem,  
 Et vanum stolidae proditiōnis opus. Exit*  
 LORENZO Nay and you argue things so cunningly,  
 We'll go continue this discourse at court.  
 BALTHAZAR Led by the lodestar of her heavenly looks,  
 Wends poor oppressed Balthazar,  
 As o'er the mountains walks the wanderer,  
 Incertain to effect his pilgrimage.  
*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene xi

*Enter two PORTINGALES, and HIERONIMO meets them*  
 1 PORTINGALE By your leave, sir.  
 HIERONIMO Good leave have you: nay, I pray you go,  
 For I'll leave you; if you can leave me, so.  
 2 PORTINGALE Pray you, which is the next way to my  
 lord the duke's?  
 HIERONIMO The next way from me.  
 PORTINGALE To his house, we mean.  
 HIERONIMO O, hard by, 'tis yon house that you see.  
 PORTINGALE You could not tell us if his son were  
 there?  
 HIERONIMO Who, my lord Lorenzo?  
 PORTINGALE Ay, sir.  
*He goeth in at one door and comes out at another*  
 HIERONIMO O, forbear,  
 For other talk for us far fitter were.  
 But if you be importunate to know 10  
 The way to him, and where to find him out,  
 Then list to me, and I'll resolve your doubt.  
 There is a path upon your left-hand side,  
 That leadeth from a guilty conscience  
 Unto a forest of distrust and fear,  
 A darksome place, and dangerous to pass:  
 There shall you meet with melancholy thoughts,  
 Whose baleful humours if you but uphold,  
 It will conduct you to despair and death;

102-3 *Et tremulo . . . proditiōnis opus*: 'they linked severe dread  
 to trembling fear, a futile work of idiotic treason'  
 (Mulryne)  
 106 lodestar: a guiding star  
 109 Incertain to effect: unlikely to complete  
 4 next: nearest  
 10 be importunate to know: insist on knowing  
 13 a path upon your left-hand side: the path to deepest hell  
 18 baleful humours: evil disposition  
 uphold: persist in

Whose rocky cliffs when you have once beheld, 20  
 Within a huge dale of lasting night,  
 That, kindled with the world's iniquities,  
 Doth cast up filthy and detested fumes,  
 Not far from thence, where murderers have built  
 A habitation for their cursed souls,  
 There, in a brazen cauldron, fixed by Jove  
 In his fell wrath upon a sulphur flame,  
 Yourselves shall find Lorenzo bathing him  
 In boiling lead and blood of innocents.

I PORTINGALE Ha, ha, ha! 30  
 HIERONIMO Ha, ha, ha!  
 Why, ha, ha, ha! Farewell, good, ha, ha, ha! *Exit*  
 2 PORTINGALE Doubtless this man is passing lunatic,  
 Or imperfection of his age doth make him dote.  
 Come, let's away to seek my lord the duke.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene xii

*Enter HIERONIMO, with a poniard in one hand, and a rope in the other*

HIERONIMO Now sir, perhaps I come and see the king,  
 The king sees me, and fain would hear my suit:  
 Why, is not this a strange and seld-seen thing,  
 That standers-by with toys should strike me mute?  
 Go to, I see their shifts, and say no more.  
 Hieronimo, 'tis time for thee to trudge:  
 Down by the dale that flows with purple gore  
 Standeth a fiery tower; there sits a judge  
 Upon a seat of steel and molten brass,  
 And 'twixt his teeth he holds a fire-brand, 10  
 That leads unto the lake where hell doth stand.  
 Away, Hieronimo, to him be gone:  
 He'll do thee justice for Horatio's death.  
 Turn down this path, thou shalt be with him straight;  
 Or this, and then thou need'st not take thy breath.  
 This way or that way? Soft and fair, not so:  
 For if I hang or kill myself, let's know

21 huge: huge

32 passing: exceedingly

33 imperfection of his age: senility

SD Hieronimo enters with a dagger and a halter, the 'stock "properties" of a would-be suicide' in Elizabethan drama (Boas)

3 seld: seldom

4 toys: things (or matters) of no importance

5 shifts: tricks

6 trudge: get moving, but not necessarily slowly, as in the modern sense of the word

6-11 Hieronimo, 'tis . . . doth stand: Hieronimo seeks justice in a symbolic landscape which recalls that in which Don Andrea sought a resting place at the beginning of the play

7 purple: blood-red

Who will revenge Horatio's murder then?  
 No, no! Fie, No! pardon me, I'll none of that:  
*He flings away the dagger and halter*  
 This way I'll take, and this way comes the king; 20  
*He takes them up again*  
 And here I'll have a fling at him, that's flat;  
 And, Balthazar, I'll be with thee to bring,  
 And thee, Lorenzo! Here's the king; nay, stay,  
 And here, ay here; there goes the hare away.

*Enter KING, AMBASSADOR, CASTILE, and LORENZO*

KING Now show, Ambassador, what our viceroy saith:  
 Hath he received the articles we sent?  
 HIERONIMO Justice, O, justice to Hieronimo!  
 LORENZO Back! See'st thou not the king is busy?  
 HIERONIMO O, is he so?  
 KING Who is he that interrupts our business? 30  
 HIERONIMO Not I. Hieronimo, beware: go by, go by.  
 AMBASSADOR Renowned king, he hath received and  
 read  
 Thy kingly proffers, and thy promised league,  
 And, as a man extremely overjoyed  
 To hear his son so princely entertained  
 Whose death he had so solemnly bewailed,  
 This for thy further satisfaction  
 And kingly love, he kindly lets thee know:  
 First, for the marriage of his princely son  
 With Bel-imperia, thy beloved niece, 40  
 The news are more delightful to his soul,  
 Than myrrh or incense to the offended heavens.  
 In person, therefore, will he come himself,  
 To see the marriage rites solemnised;  
 And, in the presence of the court of Spain,  
 To knit a sure, inexplicable band  
 Of kingly love, and everlasting league,  
 Betwixt the crowns of Spain and Portingale,  
 There will he give his crown to Balthazar,  
 And make a queen of Bel-imperia. 50

KING Brother, how like you this our viceroy's love?

CASTILE No doubt, my lord, it is an argument

Of honourable care to keep his friend,

And wondrous zeal to Balthazar his son;

Nor am I least indebted to his grace

That bends his liking to my daughter thus.

AMBASSADOR Now last, dread lord, here hath his  
 highness sent

(Although he send not that his son return)

22 I'll be . . . to bring: I'll get even with you

24 there goes the hare away: Edwards notes that this refers to losing something one has tried to achieve or hold

31 go by, go by: be careful, don't get into trouble

46 inexplicable: that which cannot be untied

52 argument: proof

56 bends: directs

58 that: in order that

His ransom due to Don Horatio.  
 HIERONIMO Horatio! Who calls Horatio? 60  
 KING And well remembered, thank his majesty.  
 Here, see it given to Horatio.  
 HIERONIMO Justice, O justice, justice, gentle king!  
 KING What is that? Hieronimo?  
 HIERONIMO Justice, O, justice! O my son, my son,  
 My son, whom naught can ransom or redeem!  
 LORENZO Hieronimo, you are not well advised.  
 HIERONIMO Away, Lorenzo, hinder me no more,  
 For thou hast made me bankrupt of my bliss.  
 Give me my son, you shall not ransom him! 70  
 Away! I'll rip the bowels of the earth,  
*He diggeth with his dagger*  
 And ferry over to th' Elysian plains  
 And bring my son to show his deadly wounds.  
 Stand from about me!  
 I'll make a pickaxe of my poniard,  
 And here surrender up my marshalship:  
 For I'll go marshal up the fiends in hell,  
 To be avenged on you all for this.  
 KING What means this outrage?  
 Will none of you restrain his fury? 80  
 HIERONIMO Nay, soft and fair: you shall not need to  
 strive,  
 Needs must he go that the devils drive. *Exit*  
 KING What accident hath happed Hieronimo?  
 I have not seen him to demean him so.  
 LORENZO My gracious lord, he is with extreme pride,  
 Conceived of young Horatio his son,  
 And covetous of having to himself  
 The ransom of the young prince Balthazar,  
 Distract, and in a manner lunatic.  
 KING Believe me, nephew, we are sorry for't: 90  
 This is the love that fathers bear their sons.  
 But, gentle brother, go give to him this gold,  
 The prince's ransom; let him have his due.  
 For what he hath Horatio shall not want:  
 Haply Hieronimo hath need thereof.  
 LORENZO But if he be thus helplessly distract,  
 'Tis requisite his office be resigned,  
 And given to one of more discretion.  
 KING We shall increase his melancholy so.  
 'Tis best that we see further in it first; 100  
 Till when, ourself will exempt the place.  
 And brother, now bring in the ambassador,  
 That he may be a witness of the match

62 see it given to Horatio: the King believes that Horatio is still alive  
 83 happed: happened to  
 84 demean him: behave himself  
 101 exempt the place: the meaning is unclear but it possible that the King is saying that he will take over Hieronimo's duties until the whole situation is clearer, rather than hastily removing him from office, as Lorenzo has suggested

'Twixt Balthazar and Bel-imperia,  
 And that we may prefix a certain time,  
 Wherein the marriage shall be solemnised,  
 That we may have thy lord the viceroy here.  
 AMBASSADOR Therein your highness highly shall  
 content  
 His majesty, that longs to hear from hence.  
 KING On, then, and hear you, Lord Ambassador. 110  
*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene xiii

*Enter HIERONIMO with a book in his hand*  
 HIERONIMO *Vindicta mihi!*  
 Ay, heaven will be revenged of every ill,  
 Nor will they suffer murder unrepaid:  
 Then stay, Hieronimo, attend their will,  
 For mortal men may not appoint their time.  
 'Per scelus semper tutum est sceleribus iter.'  
 Strike, and strike home, where wrong is offered thee;  
 For evils unto ills conductors be,  
 And death's the worst of resolution.  
 For he that thinks with patience to contend 10  
 To quiet life, his life shall easily end.  
 'Fata si miseros juvant, habes salutem;  
 Fata si vitam negant, habes sepulchrum.'  
 If destiny thy miseries do ease,  
 Then hast thou health, and happy shalt thou be;  
 If destiny deny thee life, Hieronimo,  
 Yet shalt thou be assured of a tomb;  
 If neither, yet let this thy comfort be,  
 Heaven covereth him that hath no burial.  
 And to conclude, I will revenge his death! 20  
 But how? Not as the vulgar wits of men,  
 With open, but inevitable ills,  
 As by a secret, yet a certain mean,  
 Which under kindship will be cloaked best.  
 Wise men will take their opportunity,  
 Closely and safely fitting things to time.

SD Hieronimo carries a copy of Seneca  
 1 *Vindicta mihi!*: Hieronimo is not quoting Seneca but the beginning of a well-known Biblical admonition: 'vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord' (Romans 12.19)  
 6 'Per scelus . . . sceleribus iter': 'the safe way for crime is through further crimes'; from Seneca's *Agamemnon* (1.115)  
 12-13 'Fata si . . . habes sepulchrum': from Seneca's *Troades* (ll. 511-12). Hieronimo gives a loose translation over the next four lines  
 21 vulgar: common  
 22-4 With open . . . cloaked best: Hieronimo seems to contrast the crude but effective actions of some revengers with the more subtle means he is contemplating  
 23 mean: course of action  
 24 kindship: kindness

But in extremes advantage hath no time;  
 And therefore all times fit not for revenge.  
 Thus therefore will I rest me in unrest,  
 Dissembling quiet in unquietness,  
 Not seeming that I know their villainies;  
 That my simplicity may make them think  
 That ignorantly I will let all slip—  
 For ignorance, I wot, and well they know,  
 'Remedium malorum iners est.'  
 Nor aught avails it me to menace them,  
 Who, as a wintry storm upon a plain,  
 Will bear me down with their nobility.  
 No, no, Hieronimo, thou must enjoin  
 Thine eyes to observation, and thy tongue  
 To milder speeches than thy spirit affords,  
 Thy heart to patience, and thy hands to rest,  
 Thy cap to courtesy, and thy knee to bow,  
 Till to revenge thou know, when, where and how.

*A noise within*

How now, what noise? What coil is that you keep?

*Enter a SERVANT*

SERVANT Here are a sort of poor petitioners,  
 That are importunate, and it shall please you, sir,  
 That you should plead their cases to the king.  
 HIERONIMO That I should plead their several actions?  
 Why, let them enter, and let me see them. 50

*Enter three CITIZENS and an OLD MAN (SENEX)*

I CITIZEN So, I tell you this, for learning and for law,  
 There's not any advocate in Spain  
 That can prevail, or will take half the pain  
 That he will, in pursuit of equity.  
 HIERONIMO Come near, you men, that thus importune  
 me.  
 (*Aside*) Now must I bear a face of gravity,  
 For thus I used, before my marshalship,  
 To plead in causes as corregidor—  
 Come on sirs, what's the matter?

2 CITIZEN Sir, an action.

HIERONIMO Of battery?

I CITIZEN Mine of debt.

HIERONIMO Give place. 60

2 CITIZEN No sir, mine is an action of the case.

3 CITIZEN Mine an *ejectione firmæ* by a lease.  
 HIERONIMO Content you sirs, are you determined  
 That I should plead your several actions?

30 I CITIZEN Ay sir, and here's my declaration.

2 CITIZEN And here is my band.

3 CITIZEN And here is my lease.

*They give him papers*

HIERONIMO But wherefore stands yon silly man so mute,  
 With mournful eyes and hands to heaven upreared?

Come hither, father, let me know thy cause.

SENEX O worthy sir, my cause, but slightly known, 70

May move the hearts of warlike Myrmidons

And melt the Corsic rocks with ruthless tears.

40 HIERONIMO Say, father, tell me what's thy suit?

SENEX No sir, could my woes

Give way unto my most distressful words,

Then should I not in paper, as you see,

With ink bewray what blood began in me.

HIERONIMO What's here? 'The humble supplication  
 Of Don Bazulto for his murdered son.'

SENEX Ay sir.

80

HIERONIMO No sir, it was my murdered son,

O my son, my son, O my son Horatio!

But mine, or thine, Bazulto, be content.

Here, take my handkercher, and wipe thine eyes,

Whiles wretched I in thy mishaps may see

The lively portrait of my dying self.

*He draweth out a bloody napkin*

O no, not this: Horatio, this was thine,

And when I dyed it in thy dearest blood,

This was a token 'twixt thy soul and me

That of thy death revenged I should be.

But here, take this, and this—what, my purse?— 90

Ay, this, and that, and all of them are thine;

For all as one are our extremities.

I CITIZEN O see the kindness of Hieronimo!

2 CITIZEN This gentleness shows him a gentleman.

HIERONIMO See, see, O see thy shame, Hieronimo,

See here a loving father to his son!

Behold the sorrows and the sad laments

That he delivereth for his son's decease!

If love's effects so strives in lesser things,

If love enforce such moods in meaner wits, 100

If love express such power in poor estates—

27–8 But in . . . for revenge: Hieronimo notes that only in desperate situations ('extremes') would a revenger forgo the 'advantage' of considered and subtle revenge. Hence his plan, formulated over the next few lines, to delay

35 'Remedium malorum iners est': 'Is an idle remedy for ills'; from Seneca, *Oedipus*, l. 515

38 nobility: noble rank

46 sort: group

58 corregidor: advocate

61 action of the case: an action which requires a special writ to support it

62 *ejectione firmæ*: 'a writ to eject a tenant from his holding before the expiration of his lease' (Edwards)

66 band: bond

67 silly: pitiable

71 Myrmidons: the fearless followers of Achilles

72 Corsic rocks: the craggy rocks of the island of Corsica to which Seneca was exiled

77 blood: passion

100 meaner wits: of lower social rank

Hieronimo, whenas a raging sea  
 Tossed with the wind and tide, o'erturneth then  
 The upper billows, course of waves to keep,  
 Whilst lesser waters labour in the deep,  
 Then sham'st thou not, Hieronimo, to neglect  
 The sweet revenge of thy Horatio?  
 Though on this earth justice will not be found,  
 I'll down to hell, and in this passion  
 Knock at the dismal gates of Pluto's court, **110**  
 Getting by force, as once Alcides did,  
 A troop of Furies and tormenting hags  
 To torture Don Lorenzo and the rest.  
 Yet lest the triple-headed porter should  
 Deny my passage to the slimy strond,  
 The Thracian poet thou shalt counterfeit:  
 Come on, old father, be my Orpheus,  
 And if thou canst no notes upon the harp,  
 Then sound the burden of thy sore heart's grief,  
 Till we do gain that Proserpine may grant **120**  
 Revenge on them that murdered my son.  
 Then will I rent and tear them thus and thus,  
 Shivering their limbs in pieces with my teeth.

*Tear the papers*

1 CITIZEN O sir, my declaration!

*Exit Hieronimo and they after*

2 CITIZEN Save my bond!

*Enter HIERONIMO*

2 CITIZEN Save my bond!

3 CITIZEN Alas, my lease! It cost me ten pound,

And you, my lord, have torn the same.

HIERONIMO That cannot be, I gave it never a wound;

Show me one drop of blood fall from the same: **130**

How is it possible I should slay it then?

Tush, no; run after, catch me if you can.

*Exeunt all but the OLD MAN*

*BAZULTO remains till HIERONIMO enters again, who, staring him in the face, speaks*

HIERONIMO And art thou come, Horatio, from the  
 depth,

102-7 Hieronimo, whenas . . . thy Horatio?: the sea imagery is not clear, yet the overall impression is that Hieronimo is moved by the plight of the old man (a meaner wit) rather as Hamlet is by the First Player's show of grief in Shakespeare's play

109 passion: suffering

110 Pluto: the god of the underworld

111 Alcides: Hercules

114 triple-headed porter: the monstrous three-headed dog who guarded the underworld but was defeated by Hercules

116 Thracian poet: Orpheus, who rescued his dead wife from the underworld by charming Persephone (Proserpine) with his playing

122 rent: rend

To ask for justice in this upper earth?  
 To tell thy father thou art unrevenged,  
 To wring more tears from Isabella's eyes,  
 Whose lights are dimmed with over-long laments?  
 Go back my son, complain to Aeacus,  
 For here's no justice; gentle boy be gone,  
 For justice is exiled from the earth; **140**  
 Hieronimo will bear thee company.

Thy mother cries on righteous Rhadamanth

For just revenge against the murderers.

SENEX Alas my lord, whence springs this troubled speech?

HIERONIMO But let me look on my Horatio.

Sweet boy, how art thou changed in death's black  
 shade!

Had Proserpine no pity on thy youth,  
 But suffered thy fair crimson-coloured spring  
 With withered winter to be blasted thus?

Horatio, thou art older than thy father; **150**

Ah ruthless fate, that favour thus transforms!

SENEX Ah my good lord, I am not your young son.

HIERONIMO What, not my son? Thou, then, a Fury art,

Sent from the empty kingdom of black night

To summon me to make appearance

Before grim Minos and just Rhadamanth,

To plague Hieronimo that is remiss,

And seeks not vengeance for Horatio's death.

SENEX I am a grieved man, and not a ghost,

That came for justice for my murdered son. **160**

HIERONIMO Ay, now I know thee, now thou nam'st  
 thy son;

Thou art the lively image of my grief:

Within thy face my sorrows I may see.

Thy eyes are gummed with tears, thy cheeks are wan,

Thy forehead troubled, and thy muttering lips

Murmur sad words abruptly broken off,

By force of windy sighs thy spirit breathes;

And all this sorrow riseth for thy son:

And selfsame sorrow feel I for my son.

Come in old man, thou shalt to Isabel; **170**

Lean on my arm: I thee, thou me shalt stay,

And thou, and I, and she, will sing a song,

Three parts in one, but all of discords framed—

Talk not of cords, but let us now be gone,

For with a cord Horatio was slain.

*Exeunt*

138 Aeacus: a judge in the underworld

142 cries on righteous Rhadamanth: pleads to Rhadamanth, a

judge in the underworld

149 blasted: blighted

151 favour: countenance, looks

153 Fury: avenging spirit

156 Minos: the third judge in the underworld

162 lively: living

171 stay: support

174 cords: pun on 'chord' (musical) and cord meaning rope

## Act III, scene xiv

*Enter* KING OF SPAIN, *the* DUKE, VICEROY, *and* LORENZO,  
BALHAZAR, DON PEDRO *and* BEL-IMPERIA

KING Go brother, it is the Duke of Castile's cause,  
Salute the viceroy in our name.

CASTILE I go.

VICEROY Go forth, Don Pedro, for thy nephew's sake,  
And greet the Duke of Castile.

PEDRO It shall be so.

KING And now to meet these Portuguese,  
For as we now are, so sometimes were these,  
Kings and commanders of the western Indies.  
Welcome, brave viceroy, to the court of Spain,  
And welcome all his honourable train.

'Tis not unknown to us, for why you come,  
Or have so kingly crossed the seas:  
Sufficeth it, in this we note the troth  
And more than common love you lend to us.

So is it that mine honourable niece,  
(For it beseems us now that it be known)  
Already is betrothed to Balthazar,  
And by appointment and our condescent  
To-morrow are they to be married.  
To this intent we entertain thyself,  
Thy followers, their pleasure and our peace.

Speak, men of Portingale, shall it be so?  
If ay, say so; if not, say flatly no.

VICEROY Renowned king, I come not as thou think'st,  
With doubtful followers, unresolved men,  
But such as have upon thine articles  
Confirmed thy motion and contented me.  
Know sovereign, I come to solemnise  
The marriage of thy beloved niece,  
Fair Bel-imperia, with my Balthazar—  
With thee, my son; whom sith I live to see,  
Here take my crown, I give it her and thee;  
And let me live a solitary life,  
In ceaseless prayers,  
To think how strangely heaven hath thee preserved.

KING See brother, see, how nature strives in him!

Come, worthy viceroy, and accompany  
Thy friend with thine extremities;  
A place more private fits this princely mood.

VICEROY Or here or where your highness thinks it  
good.

*Exeunt all but* CASTILE *and* LORENZO

9 train: company

12 troth: loyalty

17 condescent: agreement

26 motion: proposal

34 strangely: wonderfully

35 nature strives in him: he weeps

37 extremities: powerful emotions

CASTILE Nay stay, Lorenzo, let me talk with you. 40  
See'st thou this entertainment of these kings?

LORENZO I do, my lord, and joy to see the same.

CASTILE And knowest thou why this meeting is?

LORENZO For her, my lord, whom Balthazar doth love,  
And to confirm their promised marriage.

CASTILE She is thy sister?

LORENZO Who, Bel-imperia?

Ay, my gracious lord, and this is the day  
That I have longed so happily to see.

CASTILE Thou wouldst be loath that any fault of thine  
Should intercept her in her happiness. 50

LORENZO Heavens will not let Lorenzo err so much.

CASTILE Why then, Lorenzo, listen to my words:

It is suspected and reported too,  
That thou, Lorenzo, wrong'st Hieronimo,  
And in his suits towards his majesty  
Still keep'st him back, and seeks to cross his suit.

LORENZO That I, my lord?

CASTILE I tell thee son, myself have heard it said,  
When, to my sorrow, I have been ashamed  
To answer for thee, though thou art my son. 60

Lorenzo, knowest thou not the common love  
And kindness that Hieronimo hath won  
By his deserts within the court of Spain?

Or seest thou not the king my brother's care

In his behalf, and to procure his health?

Lorenzo, shouldst thou thwart his passions,

And he exclaim against thee to the king,

What honour were't in this assembly,

Or what a scandal were't among the kings

To hear Hieronimo exclaim on thee? 70

Tell me, and look thou tell me truly too,

Whence grows the ground of this report in court?

LORENZO My lord, it lies not in Lorenzo's power

To stop the vulgar, liberal of their tongues:

A small advantage makes a water-breach,

And no man lives that long contenteth all.

CASTILE Myself have seen thee busy to keep back  
Him and his supplications from the king.

LORENZO Yourself, my lord, hath seen his passions,  
That ill beseemed the presence of a king; 80

And for I pitied him in his distress,

I held him thence with kind and courteous words,

As free from malice to Hieronimo

As to my soul, my lord.

CASTILE Hieronimo, my son, mistakes thee then.

LORENZO My gracious father, believe me so he doth.

50 intercept: interrupt

56 cross: prevent

74 vulgar, liberal: common people, licentious

75 advantage: opportunity

water-breach: an opening in a wall caused by water  
pressure

But what's a silly man, distract in mind,  
To think upon the murder of his son?  
Alas, how easy is it for him to err!  
But for his satisfaction and the world's,  
'Twere good, my lord, that Hieronimo and I  
Were reconciled, if he misconster me.  
CASTILE Lorenzo, thou hast said; it shall be so;  
Go one of you and call Hieronimo.

*Enter BALTHAZAR and BEL-IMPERIA*

BALTHAZAR Come, Bel-imperia, Balthazar's content,  
My sorrow's ease and sovereign of my bliss,  
Sith heaven hath ordained thee to be mine;  
Disperse those clouds and melancholy looks,  
And clear them up with those thy sun-bright eyes,  
Wherein my hope and heaven's fair beauty lies. 100

BEL-IMPERIA My looks, my lord, are fitting for my  
love,

Which new begun, can show no brighter yet.

BALTHAZAR New kindled flames should burn as  
morning sun.

BEL-IMPERIA But not too fast, lest heat and all be done.  
I see my lord my father.

BALTHAZAR Truce, my love;  
I will go salute him.

CASTILE Welcome, Balthazar,  
Welcome brave prince, the pledge of Castile's peace;  
And welcome Bel-imperia. How now, girl?  
Why com'st thou sadly to salute us thus?  
Content thyself, for I am satisfied;  
It is not now as when Andrea lived,  
We have forgotten and forgiven that,  
And thou art graced with a happier love.  
But Balthazar, here comes Hieronimo,  
I'll have a word with him.

*Enter HIERONIMO and a Servant*

HIERONIMO And where's the duke?

SERVANT Yonder.

HIERONIMO Even so:

What new device have they devised, trow?  
*Pocas palabras*, mild as the lamb,  
Is't I will be revenged? No, I am not the man.

CASTILE Welcome Hieronimo.

LORENZO Welcome Hieronimo.

BALTHAZAR Welcome Hieronimo.

HIERONIMO My lords, I thank you for Horatio.

CASTILE Hieronimo, the reason that I sent  
To speak with you, is this.

HIERONIMO What, so short?

Then I'll be gone, I thank you for't.

CASTILE Nay, stay, Hieronimo—go call him, son.

LORENZO Hieronimo, my father craves a word with  
you.

HIERONIMO With me sir? Why, my lord, I thought you  
had done.

LORENZO (*Aside*) No, would he had.

CASTILE Hieronimo, I hear  
You find yourself aggrieved at my son 131  
Because you have not access unto the king,  
And say 'tis he that intercepts your suits.

HIERONIMO Why, is not this a miserable thing, my  
lord?

CASTILE Hieronimo, I hope you have no cause,  
And would be loath that one of your deserts  
Should once have reason to suspect my son,  
Considering how I think of you myself.

HIERONIMO Your son Lorenzo! Whom, my noble lord?  
The hope of Spain, mine honourable friend? 140  
Grant me the combat of them, if they dare

*Draws out his sword*

I'll meet him face to face, to tell me so.

These be the scandalous reports of such  
As love not me, and hate my lord too much.  
Should I suspect Lorenzo would prevent  
Or cross my suit, that loved my son so well?  
My lord I am ashamed it should be said.

LORENZO Hieronimo, I never gave you cause.

HIERONIMO My good lord, I know you did not.

CASTILE There then pause,  
And for the satisfaction of the world, 150

Hieronimo, frequent my homely house,  
The Duke of Castile, Cyprian's ancient seat,  
And when thou wilt, use me, my son, and it.  
But here, before Prince Balthazar and me,  
Embrace each other, and be perfect friends.

HIERONIMO Ay marry, my lord, and shall.

Friends, quoth he? See, I'll be friends with you all:  
Specially with you, my lovely lord;

For divers causes it is fit for us  
That we be friends, the world is suspicious, 160  
And men may think what we imagine not.

BALTHAZAR Why, this is friendly done, Hieronimo.

LORENZO And thus I hope old grudges are forgot.

HIERONIMO What else? It were a shame it should not  
be so.

CASTILE Come on, Hieronimo, at my request;  
Let us intreat your company today.

*Exeunt all but HIERONIMO*

92 misconster: misconstrue

109 sadly: with a serious demeanour

117 trow?: do you think?

118 *Pocas palabras*: few words (Spanish)

133 intercepts: obstructs

141 the combat of them: the right to meet them in combat

146 cross: obstruct

153 use: make use of

HIERONIMO Your lordship's to command.—Pha! Keep  
your way:  
*Chi mi fa più carezze che non suole,  
Tradito mi ha, o tradir vuole.*

Exit

### Act III, scene xv

GHOST OF ANDREA *and* REVENGE

ANDREA Awake, Erichtho! Cerberus, awake!  
Solicit Pluto, gentle Proserpine;  
To combat, Acheron and Erebus!  
For ne'er by Styx and Phlegethon in hell  
[. . .]  
Nor ferried Charon to the fiery lakes  
Such fearful sights, as poor Andrea sees!  
Revenge, awake!

REVENGE Awake? For why?

ANDREA Awake, Revenge, for thou art ill advised 10  
To sleep away what thou art warned to watch.

REVENGE Content thyself, and do not trouble me.

ANDREA Awake, Revenge, if love, as love hath had,  
Have yet the power or prevalence in hell!  
Hieronimo with Lorenzo is joined in league,  
And intercepts our passage to revenge:  
Awake, Revenge, or we are woe-begone!

REVENGE Thus worldlings ground, what they have  
dreamed, upon.

Content thyself, Andrea: though I sleep,  
Yet is my mood soliciting their souls;  
Sufficeth thee that poor Hieronimo  
Cannot forget his son Horatio.  
Nor dies Revenge although he sleep awhile,  
For in unquiet, quietness is feigned,  
And slumbering is a common worldly wile.  
Behold, Andrea, for an instance how  
Revenge hath slept, and then imagine thou  
What 'tis to be subject to destiny.

Enter a DUMB SHOW, *they act and exeunt*

ANDREA Awake, Revenge, reveal this mystery.

167 Pha!: an exclamation of contempt

168–9 *Chi mi . . . tradir vuole*: 'He who gives me more caresses than usual has betrayed me, or wishes to betray me' (Italian)

1 Erichtho: the Thessalian sorceress

3 Erebus: spirit of darkness

4 Styx and Phlegethon: rivers in the underworld

5 Edwards and others argue that a line is missing here.

Edwards suggests something like 'Was I distressed with outrage sore as this' which gives sense to ll. 4–7

11 To sleep away: to sleep through

18 worldlings ground . . . dreamed, upon: mortals base their belief on their dreams

20 mood: anger or attitude

REVENGE The two first, the nuptial torches bore, 30  
As brightly burning as the mid-day's sun;  
But after them doth Hymen hie as fast,  
Clothed in sable, and a saffron robe,  
And blows them out, and quencheth them with  
blood,

As discontent that things continue so.

ANDREA Sufficeth me; thy meaning's understood;

And thanks to thee and those infernal powers

That will not tolerate a lover's woe.

Rest thee, for I will sit to see the rest.

REVENGE Then argue not, for thou hast thy request. 40

*Exeunt*

### Act IV, scene i

Enter BEL-IMPERIA *and* HIERONIMO

BEL-IMPERIA Is this the love thou bear'st Horatio?

Is this the kindness that thou counterfeitst?

Are these the fruits of thine incessant tears?

Hieronimo, are these thy passions,

Thy protestations and thy deep laments,

That thou wert wont to weary men withal?

O unkind father, O deceitful world!

With what excuses canst thou show thyself,

With what [. . .]

From this dishonour and the hate of men? 10

Thus to neglect the loss and life of him

Whom both my letters and thine own belief

20 Assures thee to be causeless slaughtered.

Hieronimo, for shame, Hieronimo,

Be not a history to after times

Of such ingratitude unto thy son.

Unhappy mothers of such children then,

But monstrous fathers, to forget so soon

The death of those, whom they with care and cost

Have tendered so, thus careless should be lost. 20

Myself a stranger in respect of thee,

So loved his life, as still I wish their deaths;

Nor shall his death be unrevenged by me,

Although I bear it out for fashion's sake:

32 Hymen: god of marriage

33 Clothed in . . . saffron robe: Hymen's usual saffron (yellow) robe is here covered in sable (black)

7 unkind: unnatural

9 With what: the compositor repeats the first two words of the previous line and inserts the last six words of the succeeding line. A line, therefore, is missing

15 history: a) example; b) narrative

17–20 Unhappy mothers . . . be lost: a syntactically fractured sentence, perhaps reflecting Bel-imperia's state of mind

20 tendered: nurtured

21 in respect of: compared to

24 bear it . . . fashion's sake: 'endure it for the sake of appearances' (Kinney)



- For here I swear in sight of heaven and earth,  
Shouldst thou neglect the love thou shouldst retain  
And give it over and devise no more,  
Myself should send their hateful souls to hell,  
That wrought his downfall with extremest death.
- HIERONIMO But may it be that Bel-imperia 30  
Vows such revenge as she hath deigned to say?  
Why then, I see that heaven applies our drift  
And all the saints do sit soliciting  
For vengeance on those cursed murderers.  
Madam 'tis true, and now I find it so;  
I found a letter, written in your name,  
And in that letter, how Horatio died.  
Pardon, O pardon, Bel-imperia,  
My fear and care in not believing it,  
Nor think I thoughtless think upon a mean 40  
To let his death be unrevenged at full;  
And here I vow (so you but give consent,  
And will conceal my resolution)  
I will ere long determine of their deaths  
That causeless thus have murdered my son.
- BEL-IMPERIA Hieronimo, I will consent, conceal;  
And aught that may effect for thine avail  
Join with thee to revenge Horatio's death.
- HIERONIMO On then; whatsoever I devise,  
Let me entreat you, grace my practices. 50  
For why, the plot's already in mine head.  
Here they are.
- Enter BALTHAZAR and LORENZO*
- BALTHAZAR How now, Hieronimo?  
What, courting Bel-imperia?
- HIERONIMO Ay, my lord,  
Such courting as, I promise you,  
She hath my heart, but you, my lord, have hers.
- LORENZO But now, Hieronimo, or never,  
We are to entreat your help.
- HIERONIMO My help?  
Why, my good lords, assure yourselves of me,  
For you have given me cause,  
Ay, by my faith have you.
- BALTHAZAR It pleased you 60  
At the entertainment of the ambassador  
To grace the king so much as with a show:  
Now were your study so well furnished,  
As, for the passing of the first night's sport,  
To entertain my father with the like,
- Or any such-like pleasing motion,  
Assure yourself it would content them well.
- HIERONIMO Is this all?
- BALTHAZAR Ay, this is all.
- HIERONIMO Why then I'll fit you; say no more. 70  
When I was young I gave my mind  
And plied myself to fruitless poetry:  
Which though it profit the professor naught,  
Yet is it passing pleasing to the world.
- LORENZO And how for that?
- HIERONIMO Marry, my good lord, thus—  
And yet, methinks, you are too quick with us—  
When in Toledo there I studied,  
It was my chance to write a tragedy—  
See here my lords, *He shows them a book*  
Which long forgot, I found this other day. 80  
Now would your lordships favour me so much  
As but to grace me with your acting it—  
I mean each one of you to play a part—  
Assure you it will prove most passing strange  
And wondrous plausible to that assembly.
- BALTHAZAR What, would you have us play a tragedy?
- HIERONIMO Why, Nero thought it no disparagement,  
And kings and emperors have ta'en delight  
To make experience of their wits in plays!
- LORENZO Nay, be not angry good Hieronimo, 90  
The prince but asked a question.
- BALTHAZAR In faith, Hieronimo, and you be in earnest,  
I'll make one.
- LORENZO And I another.
- HIERONIMO Now my good lord, could you entreat  
Your sister Bel-imperia to make one?  
For what's a play without a woman in it?
- BEL-IMPERIA Little entreaty shall serve me,  
Hieronimo,  
For I must needs be employed in your play.
- HIERONIMO Why, this is well; I tell you Lordings, 100  
It was determined to have been acted  
By gentlemen and scholars too  
Such as could tell what to speak.
- BALTHAZAR And now it shall be played by princes and  
courtiers,
- 66 motion: entertainment  
70 Why then I'll fit you: a) furnish you with what you need;  
b) give you what you deserve (as punishment)  
73 professor: the one who 'professes'  
76 too quick: a) too fast or lively in repartee; b) too much  
alive  
85 plausible: agreeable  
87 Nero: the Roman emperor who supported the theatre  
and acted in plays. Mulryne notes a possible additional  
allusion in the fact that 'he was associated with violence  
and deeds of blood'  
89 experience: trial  
101 determined: intended, arranged
- 27 devise: plot  
32 applies our drift: endorses our plan  
39 care: caution  
40 thoughtless think: unconcerned  
44 determine of: bring about  
50 grace: support  
51 For why: because  
59-60 For you . . . have you: said ironically

- Such as can tell how to speak,  
If, as it is our country manner,  
You will but let us know the argument.
- HIERONIMO That shall I roundly. The chronicles of  
Spain  
Record this written of a knight of Rhodes:  
He was betrothed, and wedded at the length 110  
To one Perseda, an Italian dame,  
Whose beauty ravished all that her beheld,  
Especially the soul of Soliman,  
Who at the marriage was the chiefest guest.  
By sundry means sought Soliman to win  
Perseda's love, and could not gain the same.  
Then gan he break his passions to a friend,  
One of his bashaws whom he held full dear;  
Her had this bashaw long solicited,  
And saw she was not otherwise to be won 120  
But by her husband's death, this knight of Rhodes,  
Whom presently by treachery he slew.  
She, stirred with an exceeding hate therefore,  
As cause of this slew Soliman;  
And to escape the bashaw's tyranny  
Did stab herself: and this the tragedy.
- LORENZO O excellent!
- BEL-IMPERIA But say, Hieronimo,  
What then became of him that was the bashaw?
- HIERONIMO Marry thus: moved with remorse of his  
misdeeds,  
Ran to a mountain-top and hung himself. 130
- BALTHAZAR But which of us is to perform that part?
- HIERONIMO O, that will I my lords, make no doubt of  
it:  
I'll play the murderer, I warrant you,  
For I already have conceived that.
- BALTHAZAR And what shall I?
- HIERONIMO Great Soliman the Turkish emperor.
- LORENZO And I?
- HIERONIMO Erastus the knight of Rhodes.
- BEL-IMPERIA And I?
- HIERONIMO Perseda, chaste and resolute. 140  
And here, my lords, are several abstracts drawn,  
For each of you to note your parts,
- And act it, as occasion's offered you.  
You must provide a Turkish cap,  
A black mustachio and a fauchion.  
*Gives a paper to BALTHAZAR*  
You with a cross like to a knight of Rhodes.  
*Gives another to LORENZO*  
And madam, you must attire yourself  
*He giveth BEL-IMPERIA another*  
Like Phoebe, Flora, or the Huntress,  
Which to your discretion shall seem best.  
And as for me, my lords, I'll look to one; 150  
And, with the ransom that the viceroy sent  
So furnish and perform this tragedy,  
As all the world shall say Hieronimo  
Was liberal in gracing of it so.
- BALTHAZAR Hieronimo, methinks a comedy were  
better.
- HIERONIMO A comedy?  
Fie, comedies are fit for common wits:  
But to present a kingly troop withal,  
Give me a stately-written tragedy,  
*Tragedia cothurnata*, fitting kings, 160  
Containing matter, and not common things.  
My lords, all this must be performed,  
As fitting for the first night's revelling.  
The Italian tragedians were so sharp of wit  
That in one hour's meditation  
They would perform anything in action.
- LORENZO And well it may; for I have seen the like  
In Paris, 'mongst the French tragedians
- HIERONIMO In Paris? Mass, and well remembered!  
There's one thing more that rests for us to do. 170
- BALTHAZAR What's that, Hieronimo? Forget not  
anything.
- HIERONIMO Each one of us must act his part  
In unknown languages,  
That it may breed the more variety.  
As you, my lord, in Latin, I in Greek,  
You in Italian; and for because I know  
That Bel-imperia hath practised the French,  
In courtly French shall all her phrases be.

105 how to speak: Balthazar seems to imply that princes and courtiers are more eloquent than gentlemen and scholars, although the exact meaning of this exchange is uncertain  
107 argument: plot, narrative  
108 roundly: plainly, immediately  
108-40 The drama of Soliman and Perseda, as well as being the means by which Hieronimo pursues his revenge, rehearses many of the principal relationships in the main play  
117 break: disclose  
118 bashaws: pashas, Turkish courtiers  
134 conceived: formed a conception of  
141 abstracts drawn: outlines written up

145 fauchion: broad, curved sword  
148 Huntress: Diana, goddess of hunting  
150 look to: prepare  
154 gracing of: adorning  
160 *Tragedia cothurnata*: the most serious of Athenian drama, performed by an actor wearing buskins (thick-soled shoes)  
164-6 Reference to the performers of the *Commedia dell'arte*, famous for their skills in improvisation  
170 rests: remains  
173 unknown languages: it is not clear whether or not this promise is fulfilled in the subsequent performance, although the note in Act IV, scene iv seems to indicate that it may have been

BEL-IMPERIA You mean to try my cunning then,  
 Hieronimo.  
 BALTHAZAR But this will be a mere confusion, 180  
 And hardly shall we all be understood.  
 HIERONIMO It must be so, for the conclusion  
 Shall prove the invention and all was good.  
 And I myself in an oration,  
 And with a strange and wondrous show besides,  
 That I will have there behind a curtain,  
 Assure yourself, shall make the matter known.  
 And all shall be concluded in one scene,  
 For there's no pleasure ta'en in tediousness.  
 BALTHAZAR (*Aside to LORENZO*) How like you this? 190  
 LORENZO Why, thus my lord,  
 We must resolve to soothe his humours up.  
 BALTHAZAR On then Hieronimo, farewell till soon.  
 HIERONIMO You'll ply this gear?  
 LORENZO I warrant you.  
*Exeunt all but HIERONIMO*  
 HIERONIMO Why so.  
 Now shall I see the fall of Babylon,  
 Wrought by the heavens in this confusion.  
 And if the world like not this tragedy,  
 Hard is the hap of old Hieronimo.

*Exit*

## Act IV, scene ii

*Enter ISABELLA with a weapon*

ISABELLA Tell me no more! O monstrous homicides!  
 Since neither piety nor pity moves  
 The king to justice or compassion,  
 I will revenge myself upon this place  
 Where thus they murdered my beloved son.  
*She cuts down the arbour*  
 Down with these branches and these loathsome  
 boughs  
 Of this unfortunate and fatal pine:  
 Down with them, Isabella, rent them up  
 And burn the roots from whence the rest is sprung.  
 I will not leave a root, a stalk, a tree, 10  
 A bough, a branch, a blossom, nor a leaf,  
 No, not an herb within this garden-plot.

179 cunning: skill  
 181 hardly: with difficulty  
 183 invention: basic idea  
 185 strange and wonderous show: this refers to the body of Horatio  
 192 soothe his humours up: indulge his whims  
 194 ply this gear: carry out this business  
 195 fall of Babylon: this could refer to both the wicked city of Babylon (see Revelation 18) and the Tower of Babel with its many tongues. Babylon was also a term used by Elizabethans to signify Rome to which Spain paid allegiance

Accursed complot of my misery,  
 Fruitless for ever may this garden be!  
 Barren the earth, and blissless whosoever  
 Imagines not to keep it unmanured!  
 An eastern wind commixed with noisome airs  
 Shall blast the plants and the young saplings;  
 The earth with serpents shall be pestered,  
 And passengers, for fear to be infect, 20  
 Shall stand aloof, and, looking at it, tell,  
 'There, murdered, died the son of Isabel.'  
 Ay, here he died, and here I him embrace:  
 See where his ghost solicits with his wounds  
 Revenge on her that should revenge his death.  
 Hieronimo, make haste to see thy son,  
 For sorrow and despair hath cited me  
 To hear Horatio plead with Rhadamanth:  
 Make haste, Hieronimo, to hold excused  
 Thy negligence in pursuit of their deaths, 30  
 Whose hateful wrath bereaved him of his breath.  
 Ah nay, thou dost delay their deaths,  
 Forgives the murderers of thy noble son,  
 And none but I bestir me—to no end.  
 And as I curse this tree from further fruit,  
 So shall my womb be cursed for his sake;  
 And with this weapon will I wound the breast,  
*She stabs herself*  
 The hapless breast that gave Horatio suck.

*Exit*

## Act IV, scene iii

*Enter HIERONIMO; he knocks up the curtain. Enter the DUKE OF CASTILE*

CASTILE How now Hieronimo, where's your fellows,  
 That you take all this pain?  
 HIERONIMO O sir, it is for the author's credit  
 To look that all things may go well.  
 But, good my lord, let me entreat your grace  
 To give the king the copy of the play:  
 This is the argument of what we show.  
 CASTILE I will, Hieronimo.  
 HIERONIMO One thing more, my good lord.  
 CASTILE What's that? 10

13 complot: plot  
 16 unmanured: barren, uncultivated  
 17 noisome: pestilent  
 20 passengers: passers-by  
 32-4 Ah nay . . . no end: 'Even Isabella is deceived by Hieronimo's plan of stealthy and circumspect revenge' (Mulryne)  
 SD *he knocks up the curtain*: somehow Hieronimo has to erect a curtain (possibly over one of the doors at the rear of an Elizabethan stage) in order to conceal Horatio's body  
 I fellows: fellow actors

HIERONIMO Let me entreat your grace  
That, when the train are passed into the gallery,  
You would vouchsafe to throw me down the key.  
CASTILE I will, Hieronimo. *Exit CASTILE*  
HIERONIMO What are you ready, Balthazar?  
Bring a chair and a cushion for the king.

*Enter BALTHAZAR with a chair*

Well done, Balthazar; hang up the title.  
Our scene is Rhodes—what, is your beard on?  
BALTHAZAR Half on, the other is in my hand.  
HIERONIMO Despatch for shame, are you so long? 20  
*Exit BALTHAZAR*  
Bethink thyself, Hieronimo,  
Recall thy wits, recompt thy former wrongs  
Thou has received by murder of thy son;  
And lastly, not least, how Isabel,  
Once his mother and thy dearest wife,  
All woe-begone for him, hath slain herself.  
Behoves thee then, Hieronimo, to be revenged.  
The plot is laid of dire revenge:  
On then, Hieronimo, pursue revenge,  
For nothing wants but acting of revenge. 30  
*Exit HIERONIMO*

## Act IV, scene iv

*Enter SPANISH KING, VICEROY, the DUKE OF CASTILE,  
and their train*

KING Now, Viceroy, shall we see the tragedy  
Of Soliman the Turkish emperor,  
Performed of pleasure by your son the prince,  
My nephew Don Lorenzo, and my niece.  
VICEROY Who, Bel-imperia?  
KING Ay, and Hieronimo, our marshal,  
At whose request they deign to do't themselves:  
These be our pastimes in the court of Spain.  
Here, brother, you shall be the book-keeper:  
This is the argument of that they show. 10  
*He giveth him a book*

- 12 gallery: probably meaning the hall of an Elizabethan house rather than the upper gallery of the theatre  
13 throw me down the key: throw the key to the ground  
17 the title: reference to the practice of using a title-board to introduce the play to the audience  
20 Despatch: hurry  
22 recompt: recall to mind  
3 of pleasure: at their pleasure  
9 book-keeper: the person who had the one copy of the complete play in an Elizabethan theatre (who could also prompt the actors). The audience would already know 'the argument of that they show' but whether or not the note below, addressing *the reader of The Spanish Tragedy*, means that the play-within-a-play was then performed 'in sundry languages' is unknown

*Gentlemen, this play of Hieronimo, in sundry languages, was thought good to be set down in English more largely, for the easier understanding to every public reader.*

*Enter BALTHAZAR, BEL-IMPERIA and HIERONIMO*

BALTHAZAR *Bashaw, that Rhodes is ours, yield heavens the honour,  
And holy Mahomet, our sacred prophet;  
And be thou graced with every excellence  
That Soliman can give, or thou desire.  
But thy desert in conquering Rhodes is less  
Than in reserving this fair Christian nymph,  
Perseda, blissful lamp of excellence,  
Whose eyes compel, like powerful adamant,  
The warlike heart of Soliman to wait.*  
KING See, Viceroy, that is Balthazar, your son, 20  
That represents the emperor Soliman:  
How well he acts his amorous passion.  
VICEROY Ay, Bel-imperia hath taught him that.  
CASTILE That's because his mind runs all on  
Bel-imperia.  
HIERONIMO *Whatever joy earth yields betide your majesty.*  
BALTHAZAR *Earth yields no joy without Perseda's love.*  
HIERONIMO *Let then Perseda on your grace attend.*  
BALTHAZAR *She shall not wait on me, but I on her:  
Drawn by the influence of her lights, I yield.  
But let my friend, the Rhodian knight, come forth,* 30  
*Erasto, dearer than my life to me,  
That he may see Perseda, my beloved.*

*Enter LORENZO as Erasto*

KING Here comes Lorenzo; look upon the plot,  
And tell me, brother, what part plays he?  
BEL-IMPERIA *Ah, my Erasto, welcome to Perseda.*  
LORENZO *Thrice happy is Erasto that thou liv'st—  
Rhodes' loss is nothing to Erasto's joy;  
Sith his Perseda lives, his life survives.*  
BALTHAZAR *Ah, Bashaw, here is love between Erasto  
And fair Perseda, sovereign of my soul.* 40  
HIERONIMO *Remove Erasto, mighty Soliman,  
And then Perseda will be quickly won.*  
BALTHAZAR *Erasto is my friend, and while he lives  
Perseda never will remove her love.*  
HIERONIMO *Let not Erasto live to grieve great Soliman.*  
BALTHAZAR *Dear is Erasto in our princely eye.*  
HIERONIMO *But if he be your rival, let him die.*

16 *reserving*: protecting, preserving

18 *adamant*: magnetic loadstone

19 *wait*: attend on her

20-4 See, Viceroy . . . on Bel-imperia: Kyd reinforces the parallels between the actors and the parts they have been given

29 *lights*: eyes

33 plot: the argument (and the cast-list) found in the book

37 *to*: compared to

BALTHAZAR *Why, let him die: so love commandeth me.*

*Yet grieve I that Erasto should so die.*

HIERONIMO *Erasto, Soliman saluteth thee,* 50

*And lets thee wit by me his highness' will*

*Which is, thou shouldst be thus employed.* *Stab him*

BEL-IMPERIA *Ay me,*

*Erasto! See, Soliman, Erasto's slain!*

BALTHAZAR *Yet liveth Soliman to comfort thee.*

*Fair queen of beauty, let not favour die,*

*But with a gracious eye behold his grief,*

*That with Perseda's beauty is increased,*

*If by Perseda his grief be not released.*

BEL-IMPERIA *Tyrant, desist soliciting vain suits;* 60

*Relentless are mine ears to thy laments,*

*As thy butcher is pitiless and base,*

*Which seized on my Erasto, harmless knight,*

*Yet thy power thou thinkest to command,*

*And to thy power Perseda doth obey;*

*But were she able, thus she would revenge*

*Thy treacheries on thee, ignoble prince:* *Stab him*

*And on herself she would be thus revenged.* *Stab herself*

KING *Well said, old Marshal, this was bravely done!*

HIERONIMO *But Bel-imperia plays Perseda well.*

VICEROY *Were this in earnest, Bel-imperia,* 70

*You would be better to my son than so.*

KING *But now what follows for Hieronimo?*

HIERONIMO *Marry, this follows for Hieronimo:*

*Here break we off our sundry languages*

*And thus conclude I in our vulgar tongue.*

*Haply you think, but bootless are your thoughts,*

*That this is fabulously counterfeit*

*And that we do as all tragedians do:*

*To die today, for fashioning our scene,*

*The death of Ajax, or some Roman peer,* 80

*And in a minute starting up again,*

*Revive to please tomorrow's audience.*

*No, princes; know I am Hieronimo,*

*The hopeless father of a hapless son,*

*Whose tongue is tuned to tell his latest tale,*

*Not to excuse gross errors in the play.*

*I see your looks urge instance of these words;*

*Behold the reason urging me to this:*

*Shows his dead son*

*See here my show, look on this spectacle.*

*Here lay my hope, and here my hope hath end;* 90

*Here lay my heart, and here my heart was slain;*

*Here lay my treasure, here my treasure lost;*

Here lay my bliss, and here my bliss bereft;

But hope, heart, treasure, joy, and bliss,

All fled, failed, died, yea, all decayed with this.

From forth these wounds came breath that gave me

life;

They murdered me that made these fatal marks.

The cause was love, whence grew this mortal hate,

The hate, Lorenzo and young Balthazar,

The love, my son to Bel-imperia. 100

But night, the coverer of accursed crimes,

With pitchy silence hushed these traitors' harms

And lent them leave, for they had sorted leisure

To take advantage in my garden-plot

Upon my son, my dear Horatio:

There merciless they butchered up my boy,

In black dark night, to pale dim cruel death.

He shrieks, I heard, and yet methinks I hear,

His dismal outcry echo in the air.

With soonest speed I hasted to the noise, 110

Where hanging on a tree I found my son,

Through-girt with wounds, and slaughtered as you see.

And grieved I, think you, at this spectacle?

Speak, Portuguese, whose loss resembles mine:

If thou canst weep upon thy Balthazar,

'Tis like I wailed for my Horatio.

And you, my lord, whose reconciled son

Marched in a net, and thought himself unseen

And rated me for brainsick lunacy,

With 'God amend that mad Hieronimo!'— 120

How can you brook our play's catastrophe?

And here behold this bloody handkercher,

Which at Horatio's death I weeping dipped

Within the river of his bleeding wounds:

It as propitious, see I have reserved,

And never hath it left my bloody heart,

Soliciting remembrance of my vow

With these, O these accursed murderers:

Which now performed, my heart is satisfied.

And to this end the bashaw I became 130

That might revenge me on Lorenzo's life,

Who therefore was appointed to the part,

And was to represent the knight of Rhodes,

That I might kill him more conveniently.

So, Viceroy, was this Balthazar, thy son—

That Soliman which Bel-imperia

In person of Perseda murdered—

96 From forth . . . me life: a) Horatio's death took away Hieronimo's life-breath; b) the discovery of his murdered body inspired Hieronimo's new 'life' as a revenger

103 sorted: sought out

112 Through-girt: pierced through

118 Marched in a net: a proverbial term for concealment, deception

119 rated: berated

125 propitious: of good omen

55 *favour*: your love

68 Well said: the king compliments Hieronimo on his play

75 vulgar: everyday

76 Haply: perhaps

bootless: unavailing

77 fabulously counterfeit: a complete fiction

85 latest: last

87 instance: explanation

Solely appointed to that tragic part  
 That she might slay him that offended her.  
 Poor Bel-imperia missed her part in this: 140  
 For though the story saith she should have died,  
 Yet I of kindness, and of care to her,  
 Did otherwise determine of her end;  
 But love of him whom they did hate too much  
 Did urge her resolution to be such.  
 And princes, now behold Hieronimo,  
 Author and actor in this tragedy,  
 Bearing his latest fortune in his fist:  
 And will as resolute conclude his part  
 As any of the actors gone before. 150  
 And, gentles, thus I end my play:  
 Urge no more words: I have no more to say.  
*He runs to hang himself*

KING O hearken, Viceroy! Hold, Hieronimo!  
 Brother, my nephew and thy son are slain!  
 VICEROY We are betrayed! My Balthazar is slain!  
 Break ope the doors, run, save Hieronimo.  
*They break in, and hold* HIERONIMO  
 Hieronimo, do but inform the king of these events;  
 Upon mine honour thou shalt have no harm.  
 HIERONIMO Viceroy, I will not trust thee with my life,  
 Which I this day have offered to my son. 160  
 Accursed wretch,  
 Why stayest thou him that was resolved to die?  
 KING Speak, traitor; damned, bloody murderer, speak!  
 For now I have thee I will make thee speak—  
 Why hast thou done this undeserving deed?  
 VICEROY Why hast thou murdered my Balthazar?  
 CASTILE Why hast thou butchered both my children  
 thus?  
 HIERONIMO O, good words!  
 As dear to me was my Horatio  
 As yours, or yours, or yours, my lord, to you. 170  
 My guiltless son was by Lorenzo slain,  
 And by Lorenzo and that Balthazar  
 Am I at last revenged thoroughly,  
 Upon whose souls may heavens be yet avenged  
 With greater far than these afflictions.  
 CASTILE But who were thy confederates in this?  
 VICEROY That was thy daughter Bel-imperia;  
 For by her hand my Balthazar was slain:  
 I saw her stab him.  
 KING Why speak'st thou not?

HIERONIMO What lesser liberty can kings afford 180  
 Than harmless silence? Then afford it me:  
 Sufficeth I may not, nor I will not tell thee.  
 KING Fetch forth the tortures.  
 Traitor as thou art, I'll make thee tell.  
 HIERONIMO Indeed,  
 Thou may'st torment me, as his wretched son  
 Hath done in murdering my Horatio,  
 But never shalt thou force me to reveal  
 The thing which I have vowed inviolate.  
 And therefore in despite of all thy threats,  
 Pleased with their deaths, and eased with their  
 revenge, 190  
 First take my tongue, and afterwards my heart.  
*He bites out his tongue*

KING O monstrous resolution of a wretch!  
 See, Viceroy, he hath bitten forth his tongue  
 Rather than to reveal what we required.  
 CASTILE Yet can he write.  
 KING And if in this he satisfy us not,  
 We will devise th'extremest kind of death  
 That ever was invented for a wretch.  
*Then he makes signs for a knife to mend his pen*  
 CASTILE O, he would have a knife to mend his pen.  
 VICEROY Here; and advise thee that thou write the  
 troth. 200  
 KING Look to my brother! Save Hieronimo!  
*He with a knife stabs the DUKE and himself*  
 What age hath ever heard such monstrous deeds?  
 My brother, and the whole succeeding hope  
 That Spain expected after my decease!  
 Go bear his body hence, that we may mourn  
 The loss of our beloved brother's death;  
 That he may be entombed, whate'er befall:  
 I am the next, the nearest, last of all.  
 VICEROY And thou, Don Pedro, do the like for us;  
 Take up our hapless son, untimely slain: 210  
 Set me with him, and he with woeful me,  
 Upon the main-mast of a ship unmanned,  
 And let the wind and tide haul me along  
 To Scylla's barking and untamed gulf,  
 Or to the loathsome pool of Acheron,  
 To weep my want for my sweet Balthazar:  
 Spain hath no refuge for a Portingale.  
*The trumpets sound a dead march, the KING OF SPAIN  
 mourning after his brother's body, and the VICEROY OF  
 PORTINGALE bearing the body of his son*

153 Hold, Hieronimo: there is a debate over whether the instruction is addressed to Hieronimo (to hold back from hanging himself) or to the others (to arrest him); we prefer the former

171-5 My guiltless . . . these afflictions: Hieronimo repeats his explanation (which some critics have found tedious) yet more detail is provided and the sense of 'justice' is enhanced. The dramatic contrast between Hieronimo's urgent explanation and his later silence is complete

200 troth: truth

213 haul: drive

214 Scylla's barking and untamed gulf: Scylla and Charybdis were rocks between Italy and Sicily. Homer refers to Scylla as 'barking'

215 Acheron: one of the rivers of the underworld

216 my want for: my loss of

GHOST OF ANDREA *and* REVENGE

ANDREA Ay, now my hopes have end in their effects,  
 When blood and sorrow finish my desires:  
 Horatio murdered in his father's bower,  
 Vild Serberine by Pedringano slain,  
 False Pedringano hanged by quaint device,  
 Fair Isabella by herself misdome,  
 Prince Balthazar by Bel-imperia stabbed,  
 The Duke of Castile and his wicked son  
 Both done to death by old Hieronimo,  
 My Bel-imperia fallen as Dido fell,  
 And good Hieronimo slain by himself:  
 Ay, these were spectacles to please my soul.  
 Now will I beg at lovely Proserpine,  
 That, by the virtue of her princely doom,  
 I may consort my friends in pleasing sort,  
 And on my foes work just and sharp revenge.  
 I'll lead my friend Horatio through those fields  
 Where never-dying wars are still inured:  
 I'll lead fair Isabella to that train  
 Where pity weeps but never feeleth pain:  
 I'll lead my Bel-imperia to those joys  
 That vestal virgins and fair queens possess;  
 I'll lead Hieronimo where Orpheus plays,  
 Adding sweet pleasure to eternal days.  
 But say, Revenge, for thou must help, or none,

Against the rest how shall my hate be shown?  
 REVENGE This hand shall hale them down to deepest  
 hell,  
 Where none but Furies, bugs and tortures dwell.  
 ANDREA Then, sweet Revenge, do this at my request;  
 Let me be judge, and doom them to unrest: 30  
 Let loose poor Tityus from the vulture's gripe,  
 And let Don Cyprian supply his room;  
 Place Don Lorenzo on Ixion's wheel,  
 And let the lover's endless pains surcease—  
 (Juno forgets old wrath, and grants him ease):  
 Hang Balthazar about Chimaera's neck,  
 And let him there bewail his bloody love,  
 Repining at our joys that are above;  
 Let Serberine go roll the fatal stone,  
 And take from Sisyphus his endless moan; 40  
 False Pedringano for his treachery,  
 Let him be dragged through boiling Acheron,  
 And there live, dying still in endless flames,  
 Blaspheming gods and all their holy names.  
 REVENGE Then haste we down to meet thy friends and  
 foes:  
 To place thy friends in ease, the rest in woes.  
 For here, though death hath end their misery,  
 I'll there begin their endless tragedy.

*Exeunt*

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4 Vild: vile  
 5 quaint: cunning  
 6 misdome: slain  
 10 as Dido fell: Dido killed herself after losing Aeneas  
 (*Aeneid*, Book IV)  
 14 doom: justice  
 15 consort: accompany  
 18 inured: carried on  
 19 train: company  
 22 vestal virgins: virgins dedicated to the Roman goddess  
 Vesta who vowed themselves to chastity

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28 bugs: bugbears, horrors of the imagination  
 31 Tityus: a giant, punished by having his liver devoured by  
 vultures  
 32 Don Cyprian: Duke of Castile, who had disapproved of  
 Don Andrea's relationship with Bel-imperia  
 supply his room: take his place  
 34 the lover: Ixion, who had tried to seduce Juno  
 36 Chimaera's neck: Chimaera was a monster of Greek  
 mythology with the head of a lion, body of a goat and tail  
 of a dragon  
 40 Sisyphus: in Greek legend, the king of Crete, punished  
 in the underworld by having, eternally, to roll a stone up  
 a hill  
 43 still: continually  
 47 end: ended

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## Anon., *Arden of Faversham*

First performed 1592

First published 1592

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In the epilogue to *Arden of Faversham*, the murder of Arden, a wealthy landowner from Faversham in Kent, by his wife, Alice, her lover, Mosby, and their accomplices is called a 'naked tragedy'. This description accurately suggests a plot characterised by its simplicity and brutality, and driven by naked (and generally unattractive) emotion and appetite. There are no convoluted twists and turns, no counter-plots or double bluffs; instead, we see one failed attempt on Arden's life after another until, inexorably, we arrive at the moment of its successful enactment. The murder itself is, even after the protracted build-up, shocking in its ruthlessness: Mosby, Shakebag (one of the hired killers) and Alice take it in turns to stab him as he sits at home playing backgammon. The motive for the murder is Alice Arden's love for Mosby, a love represented (with a few important exceptions, as in i.98–104) as lustful, importunate, deceitful and unsympathetic.

Thus far, the co-ordinates are familiar ones: the wronged husband, the adulterous and duplicitous wife, the heinous murder, followed by judicial retribution to reinstate the moral order. As the title-page of the first edition tells us, the play shows 'the great malice and dissimulation of a wicked woman, the insatiable desire of filthy lust and the shameful end of all murderers'. However, as recent critics have noted, this well-worn didactic trajectory is complicated by a number of factors. First, Arden himself is wrongdoer as well as wronged: he is a grasping landowner, a beneficiary of the recent transfer of land from church to private ownership following the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in the 1530s. Arden is shown to be content to take land, legally but immorally, from its rightful holders, and this in turn speeds his own downfall, for one of those he has dispossessed, Greene, joins forces with Alice in plotting his murder. The interweaving of these two strands points to the parallels between the behaviours of Alice and of Arden himself: both refuse to be constrained by the social bonds (conferred by marriage and by property) which ought to guarantee loyalty and 'honesty' (with its connotations of honour and chastity as well as moral rectitude). Indeed, the unrestrained appetites of both – his for property, hers for Mosby – impel the plot. The meshing of the

'private' wrongdoing of Alice and Mosby with the 'public' immorality of Arden within this single narrative complicates the categories of 'heroes' and 'villains', of 'cause' and 'effect', and, indeed, of 'public' and 'private' (see Belsey 1985, Orlin 1985 and 1994, and Comensoli 1996). The blurred boundaries between these categories result in a play in which it becomes increasingly difficult to locate a secure point of attachment for audience sympathies in any single character. The 'nakedly' brutal murder is perhaps the only element of the play about which an unequivocal judgement can be reached; the complexity of motivation which drives the plot towards this act refuses any other such straightforward verdicts.

Equally disturbing are some of the notes struck in the resolution of the play: the execution of the wholly innocent Bradshaw and the only marginally involved Susan, for example, and the escape of the guilty Clarke. Also unsettling is the realization that the honest Franklin, seen throughout as the only real voice of loyalty and integrity, had been fully cognizant of his friend Arden's rapaciousness (he tells us that Arden lay murdered 'in that plot of ground/Which he by force and violence held from Reede' (Epilogue 10–11)), yet had never challenged it. The apparently straightforward tale of wrongdoing revealed and justly brought to book becomes altogether bleaker and more troubling as the plot unfolds and concludes.

The play is a domestic tragedy: that is, rather than dealing with the downfalls of kings and nobility, as tragedy typically does, it is concerned with the misfortunes and misdeeds of the middle ranks of society. But the generic classification of 'tragedy' tells only half the story, for *Arden of Faversham* has as much in common with 'history' plays as it does with tragedy. Like them, it is based in fact: Thomas Arden was murdered in Faversham by his wife, Alice, in 1551. Its principal source, like theirs, is the record of British history so well used by other dramatists: Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (1577; second edition, 1587), which contains a 5,000-word account of the murder, an event which had figured large in the popular imagination since the time it had taken place. Reading the play as 'history' instead of (or as well as) 'tragedy' draws attention away from



the characters and their individual and flawed acts and desires, and focuses it instead on the social, economic and political forces that shape and constrain them. From this perspective, *Arden of Faversham* becomes a play profoundly concerned with the deleterious impact of the Reformation, and the consequent transfers of land ownership, on social and kinship bonds and responsibilities. Arden's rise in the social hierarchy is matched by Mosby's aspirations in this regard; Black Will and Shakebag are part of the landless, rootless vagabond stratum that proliferated as a result of these transfers of land; Michael is torn between the irreconcilable positions of loyal servant and self-interested individualist. Reading *Arden* as 'history' suggests a thoroughness of social analysis within the play that would otherwise remain occluded.

Whilst the sources of *Arden of Faversham* in contemporary chronicles are beyond doubt, the question of the play's authorship remains unresolved. Despite attempts to attribute it to Shakespeare, Marlowe and Kyd, critics now agree that we have no choice but to retain the attribution to 'Anonymous' for the foreseeable future.

### Textual note

The first edition of *Arden of Faversham* was published in 1592, the second in 1599 and the third in 1633; these quarto editions are referred to as Q<sub>1</sub>, Q<sub>2</sub> and Q<sub>3</sub> respectively in the footnotes. This edition is based on Q<sub>1</sub>. Significant differences between the three quartos have been footnoted. The main source for the play, the account of the murder in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, is reproduced in the editions of the play edited by Sturges, Wine and White. Wine also includes the account from The Wardmote Book of Faversham. Kinney includes John Stow's account in his collection.

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- Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry* (1604)
- Anon., *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1605)
- George Wilkins, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607)

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# Arden of Faversham (1592)

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## Dramatis personae

ARDEN, *a landowner*

FRANKLIN, *his friend*

ALICE, *Arden's wife*

ADAM FOWLE, *landlord of the Flower-de-Luce*

MICHAEL, *Arden's servant*

MOSBY, *Alice Arden's lover*

CLARKE, *a painter*

GREENE, *a tenant*

SUSAN, *Mosby's sister and Alice's servingmaid*

BRADSHAW, *a goldsmith*

BLACK WILL }  
SHAKEBAG } *hired murderers*

A PRENTICE

LORD CHEINY, *and his MEN*

A FERRYMAN

DICK REEDE, *sailor and inhabitant of Faversham*

A SAILOR, *his friend*

MAYOR OF FAVERSHAM, *and the WATCH*

## Scene i

*Enter ARDEN and FRANKLIN*

FRANKLIN Arden, cheer up thy spirits and droop no more.

---

Scene i: there are no act or scene divisions in the quartos. We follow recent editions in dividing the play into eighteen scenes

My gracious Lord the Duke of Somerset  
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,  
By letters patents from his majesty,  
All the lands of the Abbey of Faversham.  
Here are the deeds,  
Sealed and subscribed with his name and the  
king's.

Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

ARDEN Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life;  
And, but for thee, how odious were this life,  
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,  
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes;  
Which makes me wish that for this veil of  
heaven

The earth hung over my head and covered me.  
Love letters passed 'twixt Mosby and my wife,  
And they have privy meetings in the town.  
Nay, on his finger did I spy the ring  
Which at our marriage day the priest put on.  
Can any grief be half so great as this?

FRANKLIN Comfort thyself, sweet friend; it is not  
strange

That women will be false and wavering.

ARDEN Ay, but to dote on such a one as he  
Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable.

FRANKLIN Why, what is he?

ARDEN A botcher, and no better at the first,  
Who, by base brokage getting some small stock,  
Crept into service of a nobleman,  
And by his servile flattery and fawning

---

2 Duke of Somerset: Edward Seymour, the Duke of Somerset, was appointed Lord Protector (see l. 34 below) to King Edward VI on his accession (aged 13) in 1547. DNB notes Somerset's 'rapacity in profiting by the dissolution of the monasteries'

4 letters patents: open letters or documents, usually from a sovereign, conferring 'some right, privilege, title, property, or office' (OED)

13 for this veil of heaven: instead of the sky

25 botcher: 'a tailor who does repairs' (OED)

at the first: since he was born (Wine); in his origins (Sturgess)

26 base brokage: pimping; shady deals (White)

Is now become the steward of his house,  
 And bravely jets it in his silken gown.  
 FRANKLIN No nobleman will count'nance such a  
 peasant.  
 ARDEN Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loves not me.  
 But through his favour let not him grow proud,  
 For were he by the Lord Protector backed,  
 He should not make me to be pointed at.  
 I am by birth a gentleman of blood,  
 And that injurious ribald that attempts  
 To violate my dear wife's chastity  
 (For dear I hold her love, as dear as heaven)  
 Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile  
 See his dissevered joints and sinews torn,  
 Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,  
 Smear'd in the channels of his lustful blood.  
 FRANKLIN Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me  
 To ease thy grief and save her chastity.  
 Entreat her fair; sweet words are fittest engines  
 To raze the flint walls of a woman's breast.  
 In any case be not too jealous,  
 Nor make no question of her love to thee;  
 But, as securely, presently take horse,  
 And lie with me at London all this term;  
 For women when they may will not,  
 But being kept back, straight grow outrageous.  
 ARDEN Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it,  
 And call her forth, and presently take leave.  
 How, Alice!

*Here enters ALICE*

ALICE Husband, what mean you to get up so early?

29 steward: official in charge of the domestic arrangements and expenditure of a large household (as is Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, and Antonio Bologna in *The Duchess of Malfi*)

30 bravely jets it: swaggers about

32 Lord Clifford: according to the sources, Mosby was servant to Sir Edward (later Lord) North, Alice's stepfather and Arden's former master. These facts are omitted here, and Lord Clifford is introduced as a fictional substitute

33 his: i.e. Lord Clifford's  
 him: i.e. Mosby

36 a gentleman of blood: well born  
 37 ribald: base fellow (Q3; riball Q1)

43 planchers: floorboards  
 43 channels: streams

46 Entreat: treat  
 engines: contrivances of war, and hence also of plots

47 raze: eds (race Qs)

50 as securely: confidently  
 presently: immediately

51 lie: lodge  
 term: one of the yearly sessions of the law courts

54 abhors from: goes against

30 Summer nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.  
 Had I been wake you had not rise so soon.  
 ARDEN Sweet love, thou know'st that we two, Ovid-  
 like, 60  
 Have often chid the morning when it 'gan to peep,  
 And often wished that dark Night's purblind steeds  
 Would pull her by the purple mantle back  
 And cast her in the ocean to her love.  
 But this night, sweet Alice, thou hast killed my heart;  
 I heard thee call on Mosby in thy sleep.  
 ALICE 'Tis like I was asleep when I named him,  
 For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.  
 40 ARDEN Ay, but you started up and suddenly,  
 Instead of him, caught me about the neck. 70  
 ALICE Instead of him? Why, who was there but you?  
 And where but one is, how can I mistake?  
 FRANKLIN Arden, leave to urge her over-far.  
 ARDEN Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream.  
 Let it suffice I know thou lovest me well.  
 ALICE Now I remember whereupon it came:  
 Had we no talk of Mosby yesternight?  
 50 FRANKLIN Mistress Alice, I heard you name him once  
 or twice.  
 ALICE And thereof came it, and therefore blame not me.  
 ARDEN I know it did, and therefore let it pass. 80  
 I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.  
 ALICE But tell me, do you mean to stay there long?  
 ARDEN No longer than till my affairs be done.  
 FRANKLIN He will not stay above a month at most.  
 ALICE A month? Ay me! Sweet Arden, come again  
 Within a day or two or else I die.  
 ARDEN I cannot long be from thee, gentle Alice.  
 Whilst Michael fetch our horses from the field,  
 Franklin and I will down unto the quay,  
 For I have certain goods there to unload. 90  
 Meanwhile prepare our breakfast, gentle Alice,  
 For yet ere noon we'll take horse and away.

*Exeunt ARDEN and FRANKLIN*

ALICE Ere noon he means to take horse and away!  
 Sweet news is this. Oh, that some airy spirit  
 Would, in the shape and likeness of a horse,  
 Gallop with Arden 'cross the ocean  
 And throw him from his back into the waves!  
 Sweet Mosby is the man that hath my heart,  
 And he usurps it, having nought but this,

59 rise: pronounced 'riz'; obsolete alternative to 'risen'  
 (Wine)

60 Ovid-like: Ovid (43 BC-AD 18) was a Roman poet famed for (amongst other things) his love poetry. Lines 60-4 here have been compared with his *Elegy XIII* in Book I of the *Amores*, translated by Christopher Marlowe

62 purblind: totally blind

73 leave: cease

83 than: eds (there Qs)

99 he: i.e. Arden

That I am tied to him by marriage.  
Love is a god, and marriage is but words,  
And therefore Mosby's title is the best.  
Tush! Whether it be or no, he shall be mine  
In spite of him, of Hymen, and of rites.

*Here enters ADAM of the Flower-de-Luce*

And here comes Adam of the Flower-de-Luce.  
I hope he brings me tidings of my love.  
How now, Adam, what is the news with you?  
Be not afraid, my husband is now from home.

ADAM He whom you wot of, Mosby, Mistress Alice,  
Is come to town, and sends you word by me  
In any case you may not visit him.

ALICE Not visit him?

ADAM No, nor take no knowledge of his being here.

ALICE But tell me, is he angry or displeased?

ADAM Should seem so, for he is wondrous sad.

ALICE Were he as mad as raving Hercules

I'll see him. Ay, and were thy house of force,  
These hands of mine should raze it to the ground  
Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love.

ADAM Nay, and you be so impatient, I'll be gone.

ALICE Stay, Adam, stay; thou wert wont to be my  
friend.

Ask Mosby how I have incurred his wrath;  
Bear him from me these pair of silver dice  
With which we played for kisses many a time,  
And when I lost I won, and so did he—  
Such winning and such losing Jove send me!  
And bid him, if his love do not decline,  
To come this morning but along my door,  
And as a stranger but salute me there.

This may he do without suspect or fear.

ADAM I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell.

*Exit ADAM*

ALICE Do, and one day I'll make amends for all.

I know he loves me well but dares not come  
Because my husband is so jealous,

100 And these my narrow-prying neighbours blab,  
Hinder our meetings when we would confer.  
But, if I live, that block shall be removed,  
And Mosby, thou that comes to me by stealth,  
Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men  
Nor Arden's looks. As surely shall he die  
As I abhor him and love only thee. 140

*Here enters MICHAEL*

How now, Michael, whither are you going?  
MICHAEL To fetch my master's nag. I hope you'll think  
on me.

ALICE Ay; but Michael, see you keep your oath,  
And be as secret as you are resolute.

MICHAEL I'll see he shall not live above a week.

ALICE On that condition, Michael, here is my hand:

None shall have Mosby's sister but thyself.

MICHAEL I understand the painter here hard by  
Hath made report that he and Sue is sure. 150

ALICE There's no such matter, Michael; believe it not.

MICHAEL But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a heart,  
With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth,  
The which I hear the wench keeps in her chest.

Well, let her keep it! I shall find a fellow  
That can both write and read and make rhyme too,  
And if I do—well, I say no more.

I'll send from London such a taunting letter

As she shall eat the heart he sent with salt,  
And fling the dagger at the painter's head. 160

ALICE What needs all this? I say that Susan's thine.

MICHAEL Why, then, I say that I will kill my master  
Or anything that you will have me do.

ALICE But, Michael, see you do it cunningly.

MICHAEL Why, say I should be took, I'll ne'er confess

That you know anything; and Susan, being a maid,  
May beg me from the gallows of the shrieve.

ALICE Trust not to that, Michael.

MICHAEL You cannot tell me, I have seen it, I.

But, mistress, tell her whether I live or die  
I'll make her more worth than twenty painters can, 170

104 Hymen: the god of marriage

SD *Flower-de-Luce*: an inn situated near Arden's house.  
OED notes that the current form ('fleur de lis') 'is  
scarcely found in Eng. before the 19th c.'

109 wot: know

111 In any case: under any circumstances

116 raving Hercules: Hercules went mad and committed  
suicide after putting on a shirt soaked in the poisoned  
blood of Nessus, the centaur killed by Hercules. The  
shirt was sent to him by his wife, Deianira, in the belief  
that it would act as a charm to restore her unfaithful  
husband's love for her

117 of force: fortified

120 and: if

135 narrow-prying Q<sub>2-3</sub> (marrow-prying Q<sub>1</sub>). Eds follow  
Q<sub>2-3</sub>, but do not reject the possibility that Q<sub>1</sub> may be the  
correct reading

149 hard by: near by

150 sure: betrothed

153 painted cloth: 'as opposed to woven cloth, and therefore a  
cheap substitute for tapestry. The design frequently  
incorporated verses and mottoes' (White)

159 As: that  
she: eds (not in Qs)

166-7 Susan . . . gallows: 'It was a common belief that a virgin  
could save a man from being hanged by offering to marry  
him' (White)

167 shrieve: sheriff

171 worth: wealthy

For I will rid mine elder brother away,  
 And then the farm of Bolton is mine own.  
 Who would not venture upon house and land,  
 When he may have it for a right-down blow?

*Here enters MOSBY*

ALICE Yonder comes Mosby. Michael, get thee gone,  
 And let not him nor any know thy drifts.

*Exit MICHAEL*

Mosby, my love!

MOSBY Away, I say, and talk not to me now.

ALICE A word or two, sweetheart, and then I will. 180

'Tis yet but early days; thou needest not fear.

MOSBY Where is your husband?

ALICE 'Tis now high water, and he is at the quay.

MOSBY There let him be; henceforward know me not.

ALICE Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?

Is this the fruit thy reconciliation buds?

Have I for this given thee so many favours,

Incurred my husband's hate, and—out, alas!—

Made shipwreck of mine honour for thy sake?

And dost thou say 'henceforward know me not'? 190

Remember when I locked thee in my closet,

What were thy words and mine? Did we not both

Decree to murder Arden in the night?

The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,

Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,

'Fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,

Arden to me was dearer than my soul—

And shall be still. Base peasant, get thee gone,

And boast not of thy conquest over me,

Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery. 200

For what hast thou to countenance my love,

Being descended of a noble house,

And matched already with a gentleman

Whose servant thou may'st be? And so farewell.

MOSBY Ungentle and unkind Alice; now I see

That which I ever feared and find too true:

A woman's love is as the lightning flame

Which even in bursting forth consumes itself.

To try thy constancy have I been strange.

Would I had never tried, but lived in hope. 210

ALICE What needs thou try me whom thou never  
 found false?

172 rid . . . away: i.e. kill

173 Bolton: eds agree this is probably Boughton-under-Blean, a village a few miles from Canterbury

175 right-down: downright

177 drifts: schemes

181 early days: early in the day

186 reconciliation: agreement (between Mosby and Alice)

191 closet: private room

200 mere: downright

201 countenance: 'be in keeping with' (eds)

209 strange: distant, cold

MOSBY Yet pardon me, for love is jealous.

ALICE So lists the sailor to the mermaid's song;

So looks the traveller to the basilisk.

I am content for to be reconciled,

And that I know will be mine overthrow.

MOSBY Thine overthrow? First let the world dissolve!

ALICE Nay, Mosby, let me still enjoy thy love,

And happen what will, I am resolute.

My saving husband hoards up bags of gold 220

To make our children rich, and now is he

Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,

And he and Franklin will to London straight.

MOSBY To London, Alice? If thou'lt be ruled by me,

We'll make him sure enough for coming there.

ALICE Ah, would we could!

MOSBY I happened on a painter yesternight,

The only cunning man of Christendom,

For he can temper poison with his oil

That whoso looks upon the work he draws 230

Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,

Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.

Sweet Alice, he shall draw thy counterfeit,

That Arden may by gazing on it perish.

ALICE Ay, but Mosby, that is dangerous,

For thou or I or any other else,

Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die.

MOSBY Ay, but we'll have it covered with a cloth

And hung up in the study for himself.

ALICE It may not be, for when the picture's drawn, 240

Arden, I know, will come and show it me.

MOSBY Fear not; we'll have that shall serve the turn.

This is the painter's house; I'll call him forth.

ALICE But, Mosby, I'll have no such picture, I.

MOSBY I pray thee leave it to my discretion.

How, Clarke!

*Here enters CLARKE*

Oh, you are an honest man of your word; you served  
 me well.

213 mermaid's song: lured sailors to their deaths with their singing

214 basilisk: fabulous reptile, whose glance could kill

218 still: always

221 our children: no Arden children are mentioned in the play, though they are in Holinshed. White speculates that here Alice is anticipating the children she will have with Mosby being made rich by Arden's wealth

223 straight: straightaway

225 for: to prevent (him) from (OED)

228 only: most

231–2 whoso looks . . . sight: a contemporary theory held that the eyes saw by sending out beams to the objects in view

233 counterfeit: portrait

243 the painter's house: probably indicating a door at the rear of the stage

246 Clarke: the name is the playwright's invention

CLARKE Why sir, I'll do it for you at any time,  
 Provided, as you have given your word,  
 I may have Susan Mosby to my wife. 250  
 For as sharp-witted poets, whose sweet verse  
 Make heavenly gods break off their nectar draughts  
 And lay their ears down to the lowly earth,  
 Use humble promise to their sacred Muse,  
 So we that are the poets' favourites  
 Must have a love. Ay, love is the painter's Muse,  
 That makes him frame a speaking countenance,  
 A weeping eye that witnesses heart's grief.

Then tell me, Master Mosby, shall I have her?  
 ALICE 'Tis pity but he should; he'll use her well. 260

MOSBY Clarke, here's my hand; my sister shall be thine.

CLARKE Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,  
 You shall command my life, my skill, and all.

ALICE Ah, that thou couldst be secret!

MOSBY Fear him not. Leave; I have talked sufficient.

CLARKE You know not me that ask such questions.

Let it suffice I know you love him well,  
 And fain would have your husband made away;  
 Wherein, trust me, you show a noble mind,  
 That rather than you'll live with him you hate, 270  
 You'll venture life and die with him you love.  
 The like will I do for my Susan's sake.

ALICE Yet nothing could enforce me to the deed  
 But Mosby's love. Might I without control  
 Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die;  
 But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

MOSBY Enough, sweet Alice; thy kind words makes me  
 melt.

(To CLARKE) Your trick of poisoned pictures we  
 dislike;

Some other poison would do better far.

ALICE Ay, such as might be put into his broth, 280  
 And yet in taste not to be found at all.

CLARKE I know your mind, and here I have it for you.  
 Put but a dram of this into his drink,  
 Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,  
 And he shall die within an hour after.

ALICE As I am a gentlewoman, Clarke, next day  
 Thou and Susan shall be married.

MOSBY And I'll make her dowry more than I'll talk of,  
 Clarke.

CLARKE Yonder's your husband. Mosby, I'll be gone.

*Exit CLARKE*

*Here enters ARDEN and FRANKLIN*

251-6 For as . . . love: i.e. 'just as poets need a muse to inspire  
 their art, so painters need love to inspire theirs'

260 but: unless

use: treat

268 fain: willingly, gladly

274 control: restraint

ALICE In good time. See where my husband comes. 290  
 Master Mosby, ask him the question yourself.

MOSBY Master Arden, being at London yesternight,  
 The Abbey lands whereof you are now possessed  
 Were offered me on some occasion  
 By Greene, one of Sir Antony Ager's men.  
 I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours?  
 Hath any other interest herein?

ARDEN Mosby, that question we'll decide anon.

Alice, make ready my breakfast; I must hence.

*Exit ALICE*

As for the lands, Mosby, they are mine 300  
 By letters patents from his majesty.

But I must have a mandate for my wife;

They say you seek to rob me of her love.

Villain, what makes thou in her company?

She's no companion for so base a groom.

MOSBY Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee;

But rather than I pocket up this wrong—

FRANKLIN What will you do, sir?

MOSBY Revenge it on the proudest of you both.

*Then ARDEN draws forth MOSBY'S sword*

ARDEN So, sirrah, you may not wear a sword! 310

The statute makes against artificers.

I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,

Your Spanish needle, and your pressing iron,

For this shall go with me. And mark my words,

You goodman botcher, 'tis to you I speak:

The next time that I take thee near my house,

Instead of legs I'll make thee crawl on stumps.

MOSBY Ah, Master Arden, you have injured me;

I do appeal to God and to the world. 319

FRANKLIN Why, canst thou deny wert a botcher once?

MOSBY Measure me what I am, not what I was.

ARDEN Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,

290-1 See . . . yourself: 'Alice speaks these lines for Arden to  
 hear, in order to allay his suspicions at finding her with  
 Mosby. Mosby understands immediately, and responds  
 accordingly' (White)

294 occasion: pretext

295 Sir Antony Ager: in reality, Sir Anthony Aucher

302 mandate: deed of ownership

304 makes thou: are you doing

305 groom: fellow; also a serving man (eds)

307 pocket up: submit to

310 sirrah: 'A term of address . . . expressing contempt,  
 reprimand, or assumption of authority on the part of the  
 speaker' (OED)

311 statute: passed under Edward III and forbidding anyone  
 under the rank of gentleman from carrying a sword (eds)  
 makes against: decrees against

312 I . . . do: I have a warrant for what I do

315 goodman: 'prefixed (sometimes with ironical intention)  
 to the names of those beneath the rank of gentleman'  
 (White)

322 velvet drudge: 'menial in velvet livery' (Sturges)

A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant?  
 MOSBY Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited  
 The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll'n heart,  
 Hear me but speak. As I intend to live  
 With God and His elected saints in heaven,  
 I never meant more to solicit her;  
 And that she knows, and all the world shall see.  
 I loved her once—sweet Arden, pardon me. 330  
 I could not choose, her beauty fired my heart.  
 But time hath quenched these over-raging coals,  
 And, Arden, though I now frequent thy house,  
 'Tis for my sister's sake, her waiting-maid,  
 And not for hers. Mayest thou enjoy her long;  
 Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me  
 If I dishonour her or injure thee.  
 ARDEN Mosby, with these thy protestations  
 The deadly hatred of my heart is appeased,  
 And thou and I'll be friends if this prove true. 340  
 As for the base terms I gave thee late,  
 Forget them, Mosby; I had cause to speak  
 When all the knights and gentlemen of Kent  
 Make common table-talk of her and thee.  
 MOSBY Who lives that is not touched with slanderous  
 tongues?  
 FRANKLIN Then, Mosby, to eschew the speech of men,  
 Upon whose general bruit all honour hangs,  
 Forbear his house.  
 ARDEN Forbear it! Nay, rather frequent it more.  
 The world shall see that I distrust her not. 350  
 To warn him on the sudden from my house  
 Were to confirm the rumour that is grown.  
 MOSBY By my faith, sir, you say true,  
 And therefore will I sojourn here awhile  
 Until our enemies have talked their fill;  
 And then, I hope, they'll cease and at last confess  
 How causeless they have injured her and me.  
 ARDEN And I will lie at London all this term  
 To let them see how light I weigh their words.

*Here enters ALICE and MICHAEL*

ALICE Husband, sit down; your breakfast will be cold.  
 ARDEN Come, Master Mosby, will you sit with us? 361  
 MOSBY I cannot eat, but I'll sit for company.  
 ARDEN Sirrah Michael, see our horse be ready.  
*Exit MICHAEL, returning soon after*  
 ALICE Husband, why pause ye? Why eat you not?  
 ARDEN I am not well; there's something in this broth  
 That is not wholesome. Didst thou make it, Alice?  
 ALICE I did, and that's the cause it likes not you.

*Then she throws down the broth on the ground*

341 late: lately  
 347 bruit: report  
 353 my faith: eds (faith my Qs)  
 367 likes not you: displeases you

There's nothing that I do can please your taste.  
 You were best to say I would have poisoned you.  
 I cannot speak or cast aside my eye, 370  
 But he imagines I have stepped awry.  
 Here's he that you cast in my teeth so oft;  
 Now will I be convinced or purge myself.  
 I charge thee speak to this mistrustful man,  
 Thou that wouldst see me hang, thou, Mosby, thou.  
 What favour hast thou had more than a kiss  
 At coming or departing from the town?  
 MOSBY You wrong yourself and me to cast these doubts;  
 Your loving husband is not jealous.  
 ARDEN Why, gentle Mistress Alice, cannot I be ill 380  
 But you'll accuse yourself?  
 Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate;  
 I'll take a little to prevent the worst.  
 FRANKLIN Do so, and let us presently take horse.  
 My life for yours, ye shall do well enough.  
 ALICE Give me a spoon; I'll eat of it myself.  
 Would it were full of poison to the brim!  
 Then should my cares and troubles have an end.  
 Was ever silly woman so tormented?  
 ARDEN Be patient, sweet love; I mistrust not thee. 390  
 ALICE God will revenge it, Arden, if thou dost,  
 For never woman loved her husband better  
 Than I do thee.  
 ARDEN I know it, sweet Alice; cease to complain,  
 Lest that in tears I answer thee again.  
 FRANKLIN Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.  
 ALICE Forbear to wound me with that bitter word;  
 Arden shall go to London in my arms.  
 ARDEN Loth am I to depart, yet I must go.  
 ALICE Wilt thou to London then, and leave me here?  
 Ah, if thou love me, gentle Arden, stay. 401  
 Yet if thy business be of great import,  
 Go if thou wilt; I'll bear it as I may.  
 But write from London to me every week,  
 Nay, every day, and stay no longer there  
 Than thou must needs, lest that I die for sorrow.  
 ARDEN I'll write unto thee every other tide,  
 And so farewell, sweet Alice, till we meet next.  
 ALICE Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so.  
 And, Master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,  
 In hope you'll hasten him home I'll give you this. 411  
*And then she kisseth him*  
 FRANKLIN And if he stay the fault shall not be mine.  
 Mosby, farewell, and see you keep your oath.  
 MOSBY I hope he is not jealous of me now.  
 ARDEN No, Mosby, no; hereafter think of me  
 As of your dearest friend. And so farewell.

*Exeunt ARDEN, FRANKLIN and MICHAEL*

373 convinced: proved guilty  
 382 mithridate: a universal antidote  
 389 silly: helpless, defenceless



ANON.

ALICE I am glad he is gone; he was about to stay,  
But did you mark me then how I brake off?

MOSBY Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed.  
But what a villain is this painter Clarke!

ALICE Was it not a goodly poison that he gave!  
Why, he's as well now as he was before.  
It should have been some fine confection  
That might have given the broth some dainty taste.  
This powder was too gross and populous.

MOSBY But had he eaten but three spoonfuls more,  
Then had he died and our love continued.

ALICE Why, so it shall, Mosby, albeit he live.

MOSBY It is impossible, for I have sworn  
Never hereafter to solicit thee  
Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

ALICE Thou shalt not need; I will importune thee.  
What, shall an oath make thee forsake my love?  
As if I have not sworn as much myself,  
And given my hand unto him in the church!  
Tush, Mosby. Oaths are words, and words is wind,  
And wind is mutable. Then I conclude  
'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

MOSBY Well proved, Mistress Alice; yet, by your leave,  
I'll keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

ALICE Ay, do, and spare not. His time is but short,  
For if thou beest as resolute as I,  
We'll have him murdered as he walks the streets.  
In London many alehouse ruffians keep,  
Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.  
They shall be soundly fee'd to pay him home.

*Here enters GREENE*

MOSBY Alice, what's he that comes yonder? Knowest  
thou him?

ALICE Mosby, be gone. I hope 'tis one that comes  
To put in practice our intended drifts. *Exit MOSBY*

GREENE Mistress Arden, you are well met.  
I am sorry that your husband is from home  
Whenas my purposed journey was to him.  
Yet all my labour is not spent in vain,  
For I suppose that you can full discourse  
And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

ALICE What is it, Master Greene? If that I may  
Or can with safety, I will answer you.

GREENE I heard your husband hath the grant of late,  
Confirmed by letters patents from the king,  
Of all of the lands of the Abbey of Faversham,  
Generally intituled, so that all former grants

425 gross and populous: indelicate or indigestible, and perceptible (Wine)

444 keep: live, lodge

446 to pay him home: i.e. to murder him

454 full discourse: fully explain

455 flat resolve: make completely clear to

461 Generally intituled: deeded without any exceptions

Are cut off, whereof I myself had one;  
But now my interest by that is void.

This is all, Mistress Arden; is it true nor no?

ALICE True, Master Greene; the lands are his in state,  
And whatsoever leases were before  
Are void for term of Master Arden's life.  
He hath the grant under the Chancery seal.

GREENE Pardon me, Mistress Arden; I must speak,  
For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong  
To wring me from the little land I have.

My living is my life; only that  
Resteth remainder of my portion.  
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,  
And he is greedy-gaping still for gain;

Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,  
So he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch.  
But seeing he hath taken my lands, I'll value life  
As careless as he is careful for to get;

And tell him this from me: I'll be revenged,  
And so as he shall wish the Abbey lands  
Had rested still within their former state.

ALICE Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,  
And woe is me that any man should want.

God knows, 'tis not my fault. But wonder not  
Though he be hard to others when to me—  
Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am used!

GREENE Why, Mistress Arden, can the crabbed churl  
Use you unkindly? Respects he not your birth,  
Your honourable friends, nor what you brought?  
Why, all Kent knows your parentage and what you  
are.

ALICE Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,  
I never live good day with him alone.  
When he is at home, then have I froward looks,  
Hard words, and blows to mend the match withal.  
And though I might content as good a man,  
Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls;  
And weary with his trugs at home,  
Then rides he straight to London; there, forsooth,  
He revels it among such filthy ones  
As counsels him to make away his wife.  
Thus live I daily in continual fear,

465 in state: by law

468 Chancery seal: 'the Court of the Lord Chancellor was the highest in the land, next to the House of Lords' (White)

470 touched: affected

472 living: land

472-3 only . . . portion: only my land remains from my inheritance

475 still: always

477 so: so long as

479 careful for to get: eager to acquire possessions

490 what you brought: i.e. as your dowry

494 froward: bad-tempered

497, 498 trulls, trugs: prostitutes

In sorrow, so despairing of redress  
 As every day I wish with hearty prayer  
 That he or I were taken forth the world.  
 GREENE Now trust me, Mistress Alice, it grieveth me  
 So fair a creature should be so abused.  
 Why, who would have thought the civil sir so sullen?  
 He looks so smoothly. Now, fie upon him, churl!  
 And if he live a day he lives too long. 510  
 But frolic, woman; I shall be the man  
 Shall set you free from all this discontent.  
 And if the churl deny my interest,  
 And will not yield my lease into my hand,  
 I'll pay him home, whatever hap to me.  
 ALICE But speak you as you think?  
 GREENE Ay, God's my witness, I mean plain dealing,  
 For I had rather die than lose my land.  
 ALICE Then, Master Greene, be counselled by me:  
 Endanger not yourself for such a churl, 520  
 But hire some cutter for to cut him short;  
 And here's ten pound to wager them withal.  
 When he is dead you shall have twenty more;  
 And the lands whereof my husband is possessed  
 Shall be intitled as they were before.  
 GREENE Will you keep promise with me?  
 ALICE Or count me false and perjured whilst I live.  
 GREENE Then here's my hand, I'll have him so  
 dispatched.  
 I'll up to London straight; I'll thither post,  
 And never rest till I have compassed it. 530  
 Till then farewell.  
 ALICE Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.  
*Exit GREENE*  
 And whosoever doth attempt the deed  
 A happy hand I wish, and so farewell.  
 All this goes well. Mosby, I long for thee  
 To let thee know all that I have contrived.

*Here enters MOSBY and CLARKE*

MOSBY How now, Alice, what's the news?  
 ALICE Such as will content thee well, sweetheart.  
 MOSBY Well, let them pass awhile, and tell me, Alice,  
 How have you dealt and tempered with my sister? 540  
 What, will she have my neighbour Clarke or no?  
 ALICE What, Master Mosby! Let him woo himself.  
 Think you that maids look not for fair words?  
 Go to her, Clarke, she's all alone within.

511 frolic: cheer up  
 513 interest: legal right to property  
 521 cutter: cut-throat  
 522 wager: pay  
 529 post: ride with haste  
 530 compassed: achieved  
 532 forward: eager  
 539 them: i.e. the news  
 540 tempered with: persuaded

Michael, my man, is clean out of her books.  
 CLARKE I thank you, Mistress Arden, I will in,  
 And if fair Susan and I can make a gree,  
 You shall command me to the uttermost,  
 As far as either goods or life may stretch.  
*Exit CLARKE*  
 MOSBY Now, Alice, let's hear thy news. 550  
 ALICE They be so good that I must laugh for joy  
 Before I can begin to tell my tale.  
 MOSBY Let's hear them, that I may laugh for company.  
 ALICE This morning, Master Greene—Dick Greene, I  
 mean,  
 From whom my husband had the Abbey land—  
 Came hither railing for to know the truth,  
 Whether my husband had the lands by grant.  
 I told him all, whereat he stormed amain  
 And swore he would cry quittance with the churl  
 And, if he did deny his interest, 560  
 Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.  
 Whenas I saw his choler thus to rise,  
 I whetted on the gentleman with words,  
 And, to conclude, Mosby, at last we grew  
 To composition for my husband's death.  
 I gave him ten pound to hire knaves,  
 By some device to make away the churl.  
 When he is dead he should have twenty more  
 And repossess his former lands again.  
 On this we 'greed, and he is ridden straight 570  
 To London to bring his death about.  
 MOSBY But call you this good news?  
 ALICE Ay, sweetheart, be they not?  
 MOSBY 'Twere cheerful news to hear the churl were  
 dead,  
 But trust me, Alice, I take it passing ill  
 You would be so forgetful of our state  
 To make recount of it to every groom.  
 What! To acquaint each stranger with our drifts,  
 Chiefly in case of murder—why, 'tis the way  
 To make it open unto Arden's self, 580  
 And bring thyself and me to ruin both.  
 Forewarned, forearmed; who threatens his enemy  
 Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.  
 ALICE I did it for the best.  
 MOSBY Well, seeing 'tis done, cheerly let it pass.  
 You know this Greene; is he not religious?  
 A man, I guess, of great devotion?  
 ALICE He is.

545 out of her books: out of favour with her  
 547 make a gree: come to terms  
 558 amain: with all his strength  
 559 cry quittance with: be even with  
 563 whetted on: incited  
 565 composition: agreement (for payment)  
 575 passing: extremely  
 585 cheerly: cheerfully

ANON.

MOSBY Then, sweet Alice, let it pass. I have a drift  
Will quiet all, whatever is amiss. 590

*Here enters CLARKE and SUSAN*

ALICE How now, Clarke, have you found me false?  
Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

CLARKE You did.

MOSBY And what? Will't be a match?

CLARKE A match, i'faith, sir. Ay, the day is mine.

The painter lays his colours to the life,  
His pencil draws no shadows in his love;  
Susan is mine.

ALICE You make her blush.

MOSBY What, sister, is it Clarke must be the man? 600

SUSAN It resteth in your grant. Some words are passed,

And haply we be grown unto a match  
If you be willing that it shall be so.

MOSBY Ah, Master Clarke, it resteth at my grant;

You see my sister's yet at my dispose.  
But, so you'll grant me one thing I shall ask,  
I am content my sister shall be yours.

CLARKE What is it, Master Mosby?

MOSBY I do remember once in secret talk 610

You told me how you could compound by art  
A crucifix impoisoned,  
That whoso look upon it should wax blind,  
And with the scent be stifled, that ere long  
He should die poisoned that did view it well.  
I would have you make me such a crucifix,  
And then I'll grant my sister shall be yours.

CLARKE Though I am loth, because it toucheth life,

Yet rather or I'll leave sweet Susan's love,  
I'll do it, and with all the haste I may.  
But for whom is it? 620

ALICE Leave that to us. Why, Clarke, is it possible

That you should paint and draw it out yourself,  
The colours being baleful and impoisoned,  
And no ways prejudice yourself withal?

MOSBY Well questioned, Alice. Clarke, how answer  
you that?

CLARKE Very easily. I'll tell you straight

How I do work of these impoisoned drugs:  
I fasten on my spectacles so close  
As nothing can any way offend my sight;  
Then, as I put a leaf within my nose, 630

So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell,  
And softly as another work I paint.

MOSBY 'Tis very well, but against when shall I have it?

CLARKE Within this ten days.

MOSBY 'Twill serve the turn.

Now, Alice, let's in and see what cheer you keep.

*Exit CLARKE*

I hope now Master Arden is from home,

You'll give me leave to play your husband's part.

ALICE Mosby, you know who's master of my heart;

He well may be the master of the house. 640  
*Exeunt*

## Scene ii

*Here enters GREENE and BRADSHAW*

BRADSHAW See you them that comes yonder, Master  
Greene?

GREENE Ay, very well. Do you know them?

*Here enters BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG*

BRADSHAW The one I know not, but he seems a knave,

Chiefly for bearing the other company;

For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,

Lives not again upon the earth.

Black Will is his name. I tell you, Master Greene,

At Boulogne he and I were fellow soldiers,

Where he played such pranks

As all the camp feared him for his villainy. 10

I warrant you he bears so bad a mind

That for a crown he'll murder any man.

GREENE (*Aside*) The fitter is he for my purpose, marry!

BLACK WILL How now, fellow Bradshaw! Whither  
away so early?

BRADSHAW Oh, Will, times are changed; no fellows  
now,

Though we were once together in the field;

Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can. 18

BLACK WILL Why, Bradshaw, was not thou and I

fellow soldiers at Boulogne, where I was a corporal

and thou but a base mercenary groom? 'No fellows

now' because you are a goldsmith and have a little

plate in your shop? You were glad to call me 'fellow

Will' and, with a cursy to the earth, 'one snatch, good

596–7 The painter . . . love: White suggests as a possible meaning for these lines: 'The painter reproduces life faithfully, and, in this case, his pencil need draw no shadows in his love'

602 haply: perhaps

606 so: if

618 or: than

623 baleful: noxious

624 prejudice: endanger

629 offend: harm

631 rhubarb: believed to have medicinal properties

632 softly as another: 'as easily as with any other' (White)

SD Only White of the eds suggests including this stage direction, but its insertion makes sense in the light of the lines that follow

11 warrant: assure

13 marry!: an oath derived from the name of the Virgin Mary

23 cursy: obsolete form of curtesy  
snatch: morsel

- corporal', when I stole the half ox from John the victualler, and domineered with it amongst good fellows in one night.
- BRADSHAW Ay, Will, those days are past with me.
- BLACK WILL Ay, but they be not past with me, for I keep that same honourable mind still. Good neighbour Bradshaw, you are too proud to be my fellow, but were it not that I see more company coming down the hill, I would be fellows with you once more, and share crowns with you too. But let that pass, and tell me whither you go.
- BRADSHAW To London, Will, about a piece of service wherein haply thou may'st pleasure me.
- BLACK WILL What is it?
- BRADSHAW Of late, Lord Cheiny lost some plate, which one did bring and sold it at my shop, saying he served Sir Antony Cooke.
- A search was made, the plate was found with me, and I am bound to answer at the 'size. Now Lord Cheiny solemnly vows, if law will serve him, he'll hang me for his plate. Now I am going to London upon hope to find the fellow. Now, Will, I know thou art acquainted with such companions.
- BLACK WILL What manner of man was he?
- BRADSHAW A lean-faced, writhen knave, hawk-nosed and very hollow-eyed, with mighty furrows in his stormy brows, long hair down his shoulders curled; his chin was bare, but on his upper lip a mutchado, which he wound about his ear.
- BLACK WILL What apparel had he?
- BRADSHAW A watchet satin doublet all to-torn (The inner side did bear the greater show), a pair of threadbare velvet hose, seam rent, a worsted stocking rent above the shoe, a livery cloak, but all the lace was off; 'Twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate.
- BLACK WILL Sirrah Shakebag, canst thou remember since we trolled the bowl at Sittingburgh, where I broke the tapster's head of the Lion with a cudgel-stick?
- SHAKEBAG Ay, very well, Will.
- BLACK WILL Why, it was with the money that the plate was sold for. Sirrah Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him that can tell thee who sold thy plate?
- BRADSHAW Who, I pray thee, good Will?
- BLACK WILL Why, 'twas one Jack Fitten. He's now in Newgate for stealing a horse, and shall be arraigned the next 'size.
- BRADSHAW Why then, let Lord Cheiny seek Jack Fitten forth, for I'll back and tell him who robbed him of his plate. This cheers my heart. Master Greene, I'll leave you, for I must to the Isle of Sheppey with speed.
- GREENE Before you go, let me entreat you to carry this letter to Mistress Arden of Faversham and humbly recommend me to herself.
- BRADSHAW That will I, Master Greene, and so farewell. Here, Will, there's a crown for thy good news.
- Exit* BRADSHAW
- BLACK WILL Farewell, Bradshaw; I'll drink no water for thy sake whilst this lasts. Now, gentleman, shall we have your company to London?
- GREENE Nay, stay, sirs, a little more: I needs must use your help, and in a matter of great consequence, wherein if you'll be secret and profound, I'll give you twenty angels for your pains.
- BLACK WILL How? Twenty angels? Give my fellow George Shakebag and me twenty angels, and if thou'lt have thy own father slain that thou mayest inherit his land, we'll kill him.
- SHAKEBAG Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all thy kin.
- GREENE Well, this it is: Arden of Faversham hath highly wronged me about the Abbey land, that no revenge but death will serve the turn. Will you two kill him? Here's the angels down, and I will lay the platform of his death.
- BLACK WILL Plat me no platforms! Give me the money and I'll stab him as he stands pissing against a wall, but I'll kill him.
- SHAKEBAG Where is he?
- GREENE He is now at London, in Aldersgate Street.
- 64 tapster's . . . Lion: the head of the tapster at the Lion Inn
- 71 Newgate: a London prison
- arraigned: charged
- 88 profound: cunning
- 89 angels: gold coins, worth about ten shillings (50 pence), so named because they were imprinted with the device of the Archangel Michael
- 100 platform: plan
- 105 Aldersgate Street; a fashionable street, running south from Aldersgate to St Martin's-le-Grand

25 domineered: revelled

33 and share crowns with you: i.e. rob you (eds)

40 Sir Antony Cooke: tutor to Edward VI

42 'size: assize

49 writhen: contorted

54 mutchado: moustache

56 watchet: pale blue

all to-torn: completely torn

57 The . . . show: 'more of the lining than the outside was visible' (White)

59 worsted: wool fabric (eds); (wosted Q1, Q3; wosten Q2)

63 trolled the bowl: handed round the drinking cup  
Sittingburgh: Sittingbourne, a town in Kent about 9 miles from Faversham

ANON.

SHAKEBAG He's dead as if he had been condemned by an Act of Parliament if once Black Will and I swear his death.

GREENE Here is ten pound, and when he is dead  
Ye shall have twenty more. **110**

BLACK WILL My fingers itches to be at the peasant. Ah, that I might be set a work thus through the year and that murder would grow to an occupation that a man might without danger of law. Zounds! I warrant I should be warden of the company. Come, let us be going, and we'll bait at Rochester, where I'll give thee a gallon of sack to handsel the match withal.

*Exeunt*

### Scene iii

*Here enters MICHAEL*

MICHAEL I have gotten such a letter as will touch the painter, and thus it is: **2**

*Here enters ARDEN and FRANKLIN and hears MICHAEL read this letter*

'My duty remembered, Mistress Susan, hoping in God you be in good health, as I, Michael, was at the making hereof. This is to certify you that, as the turtle true, when she hath lost her mate, sitteth alone, so I, mourning for your absence, do walk up and down Paul's till one day I fell asleep and lost my master's pantofles. Ah, Mistress Susan, abolish that paltry painter, cut him off by the shins with a frowning look of your crabbed countenance, and think upon Michael, who, drunk with the dregs of your favour, will cleave as fast to your love as a plaster

114 might: i.e. might follow his occupation (murder)  
Zounds!: oath derived from 'By God's wounds'

115 warden of the company: Black Will imagines a guild ('company') of murderers, resembling the official livery companies of the City of London, of which he would be governor or member ('warden')

116 bait: stop for food and rest

117 sack: white wine from Spain  
handsel: 'confirm or inaugurate with an omen of success' (Wine)

3-17 Michael's letter is a parody of the euphuistic style (named after John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580)) in vogue in the 1580s. It is characterised by an elaborate and sententious formality derived from its exploitation of rhetorical devices

5 certify: assure

6 turtle: turtle dove

8 Paul's: the central aisle of St Paul's Cathedral in London, known as Paul's Walk (or Duke Humphrey's Walk), was a popular meeting-place for merchants and businessmen, as well as the haunt of prostitutes and pickpockets

9 pantofles: galoshes

of pitch to a galled horseback. Thus hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or rather impetrate, mercy of your meek hands, I end. **16**

Yours, Michael, or else not Michael.'

ARDEN Why, you paltry knave!

Stand you here loitering, knowing my affairs,  
What haste my business craves to send to Kent? **20**

FRANKLIN 'Faith, friend Michael, this is very ill,  
Knowing your master hath no more but you,  
And do ye slack his business for your own?

ARDEN Where is the letter, sirrah? Let me see it.

*Then he (MICHAEL) gives him the letter*

See, Master Franklin, here's proper stuff:

Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,

A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth.

Sirrah, let me hear no more of this,

Now, for thy life, once write to her a word!

*Here enters GREENE, BLACK WILL, and SHAKEBAG*

Wilt thou be married to so base a trull? **30**

'Tis Mosby's sister. Come I once at home,

I'll rouse her from remaining in my house.

Now, Master Franklin, let us go walk in Paul's.

Come, but a turn or two and then away.

*Exeunt ARDEN, FRANKLIN and MICHAEL*

GREENE The first is Arden, and that's his man;

The other is Franklin, Arden's dearest friend.

BLACK WILL Zounds, I'll kill them all three.

GREENE Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case;

But stand close, and take you fittest standing,

And at his coming forth speed him. **40**

To the Nag's Head, there is this coward's haunt.

But now I'll leave you till the deed be done.

*Exit GREENE*

SHAKEBAG If he be not paid his own, ne'er trust  
Shakebag.

BLACK WILL Sirrah Shakebag, at his coming forth I'll  
run him through, and then to the Blackfriars and  
there take water and away.

13-14 plaster . . . horseback: part of a remedy for diseases in horses (Wine)

14 galled: sore

15 impetrate: obtain by entreaty

20 to send: i.e. to be sent

27 harlots: lewd persons of either sex

29 Now: Qs. Some eds emend to 'Nor', but, as Wine notes, 'Now' makes good sense as part of an exclamation

39 stand close: hide yourselves

fittest standing: best position; one specific sense of this is associated with hunting

43 paid his own: i.e. killed

45 Blackfriars: a fashionable residential district, which, even after the dissolution of the Dominican monastery there in 1538, retained its right of sanctuary; see xv.12n

46 take water: cross the Thames by boat

SHAKEBAG Why, that's the best; but see thou miss him not.

BLACK WILL How can I miss him, when I think on the forty angels I must have more?

*Here enters a PRENTICE*

PRENTICE 'Tis very late; I were best shut up my stall, for here will be old filching when the press comes forth of Paul's.

*Then lets he down his window, and it breaks BLACK WILL'S head* 52

BLACK WILL Zounds! Draw, Shakebag, draw! I am almost killed.

PRENTICE We'll tame you, I warrant.

BLACK WILL Zounds, I am tame enough already.

*Here enters ARDEN, FRANKLIN, and MICHAEL*

ARDEN What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

FRANKLIN 'Tis nothing but some brabbling, paltry fray, Devised to pick men's pockets in the throng.

ARDEN Is't nothing else? Come, Franklin, let us away.

*Exeunt ARDEN, FRANKLIN, and MICHAEL*

BLACK WILL What 'mends shall I have for my broken head? 60

PRENTICE Marry, this 'mends, that if you get you not away all the sooner, you shall be well beaten and sent to the Counter. *Exit PRENTICE*

BLACK WILL Well, I'll be gone; but look to your signs, for I'll pull them down all. Shakebag, my broken head grieves me not so much as by this means Arden hath escaped. (*Here enters GREENE*) I had a glimpse of him and his companion.

GREENE Why, sirs, Arden's as well as I; I met him and Franklin going merrily to the ordinary. What, dare you not do it? 71

BLACK WILL Yes, sir, we dare do it; but were my consent to give again we would not do it under ten pound more. I value every drop of my blood at a French crown. I have had ten pound to steal a dog, and we have no more here to kill a man. But that a bargain is a bargain and so forth, you should do it yourself.

GREENE I pray thee, how came thy head broke? 79

BLACK WILL Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not?

SHAKEBAG Standing against a stall, watching Arden's coming, a boy let down his shop window and broke his head; whereupon arose a brawl, and in the tumult Arden escaped us and passed by unthought on. But forbearance is no acquittance; another time we'll do it, I warrant thee.

GREENE I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow, And let us bethink us on some other place Where Arden may be met with handsomely.

Remember how devoutly thou hast sworn 90  
To kill the villain; think upon thine oath.

BLACK WILL Tush, I have broken five hundred oaths!

But wouldst thou charm me to effect this deed,

Tell me of gold, my resolution's fee;

Say thou seest Mosby kneeling at my knees,

Off'ring me service for my high attempt;

And sweet Alice Arden, with a lap of crowns,

Comes with a lowly cursy to the earth,

Saying 'Take this but for thy quarterage;

Such yearly tribute will I answer thee.' 100

Why, this would steel soft-mettled cowardice,

With which Black Will was never tainted with.

I tell thee, Greene, the forlorn traveller,

Whose lips are glued with summer's parching heat,

Ne'er longed so much to see a running brook

As I to finish Arden's tragedy.

Seest thou this gore that cleaveth to my face?

From hence ne'er will I wash this bloody stain

Till Arden's heart be panting in my hand.

GREENE Why, that's well said; but what saith Shakebag? 110

SHAKEBAG I cannot paint my valour out with words;

But give me place and opportunity,

Such mercy as the starven lioness,

When she is dry-sucked of her eager young,

Shows to the prey that next encounters her,

On Arden so much pity would I take.

GREENE So should it fare with men of firm resolve.

And now, sirs, seeing this accident

Of meeting him in Paul's hath no success,

Let us bethink us on some other place 120

Whose earth may swallow up this Arden's blood.

*Here enters MICHAEL*

See, yonder comes his man. And wot you what?

The foolish knave is in love with Mosby's sister,

89 handsomely: readily

95-7 Mosby . . . Alice Arden: since Greene did not mention Mosby or Alice Arden when hiring Black Will and Shakebag to kill Arden, Wine suggests that this reference may indicate authorial or textual confusion

99 quarterage: quarterly payment

100 answer: guarantee

50 stall: book stall, of which there were many in St Paul's churchyard

51 old filching: much stealing  
press: crowd

SD *breaks*: grazes, bruises

54 tame: hurt (White)

57 brabbling: noisy

60 'mends: amends

63 Counter: a London prison

66 as: as the fact that

70 ordinary: tavern dining room

73 to give: to be given

75 French crown: worth about five shillings at this time

- And for her sake, whose love he cannot get  
 Unless Mosby solicit his suit,  
 The villain hath sworn the slaughter of his master.  
 We'll question him, for he may stead us much.  
 How now, Michael, whither are you going?
- MICHAEL My master hath new supped,  
 And I am going to prepare his chamber. 130
- GREENE Where supped Master Arden?
- MICHAEL At the Nag's Head, at the eighteen pence  
 ordinary. How now, Master Shakebag! What, Black  
 Will! God's dear lady, how chance your face is so  
 bloody?
- BLACK WILL Go to, sirrah; there is a chance in it. This  
 sauciness in you will make you be knocked.
- MICHAEL Nay, and you be offended, I'll be gone.
- GREENE Stay, Michael, you may not 'scape us so.  
 Michael, I know you love your master well. 140
- MICHAEL Why, so I do; but wherefore urge you that?
- GREENE Because I think you love your mistress better.
- MICHAEL So think not I. But say, i'faith, what if I  
 should?
- SHAKEBAG Come to the purpose. Michael, we hear  
 You have a pretty love in Faversham.
- MICHAEL Why, have I two or three, what's that to  
 thee?
- BLACK WILL You deal too mildly with the peasant.  
 Thus it is:  
 'Tis known to us you love Mosby's sister;  
 We know besides that you have ta'en your oath  
 To further Mosby to your mistress' bed 150  
 And kill your master for his sister's sake.  
 Now, sir, a poorer coward than yourself  
 Was never fostered in the coast of Kent.  
 How comes it then that such a knave as you  
 Dare swear a matter of such consequence?
- GREENE Ah, Will—
- BLACK WILL Tush, give me leave, there's no more but  
 this:  
 Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all,  
 And hadst thou or shouldst thou utter it,  
 We have devised a complot under hand, 160  
 Whatever shall betide to any of us,  
 To send thee roundly to the devil of hell.
- And therefore thus: I am the very man,  
 Marked in my birth-hour by the Destinies,  
 To give an end to Arden's life on earth;  
 Thou but a member but to whet the knife  
 Whose edge must search the closet of his breast.  
 Thy office is but to appoint the place,  
 And train thy master to his tragedy;  
 Mine to perform it when occasion serves. 170  
 Then be not nice, but here devise with us  
 How and what way we may conclude his death.
- SHAKEBAG So shalt thou purchase Mosby for thy  
 friend,  
 And by his friendship gain his sister's love.
- GREENE So shall thy mistress be thy favourer,  
 And thou disburdened of the oath thou made.
- MICHAEL Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,  
 Sith you have urged me so apparently,  
 That I have vowed my master Arden's death;  
 And he whose kindly love and liberal hand 180  
 Doth challenge nought but good deserts of me  
 I will deliver over to your hands.  
 This night come to his house at Aldersgate;  
 The doors I'll leave unlocked against you come.  
 No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,  
 Over the threshold to the inner court,  
 But on your left hand shall you see the stairs  
 That leads directly to my master's chamber.  
 There take him and dispose him as ye please.  
 Now it were good we parted company. 190  
 What I have promised I will perform.
- BLACK WILL Should you deceive us, 'twould go wrong  
 with you.
- MICHAEL I will accomplish all I have revealed.
- BLACK WILL Come, let's go drink. Cholera makes me as  
 dry as a dog.  
*Exeunt* BLACK WILL, GREENE and SHAKEBAG.  
*Manet* MICHAEL
- MICHAEL Thus feeds the lamb securely on the down  
 Whilst through the thicket of an arbour brake  
 The hunger-bitten wolf o'erprises his haunt  
 And takes advantage to eat him up.  
 Ah, harmless Arden, how, how hast thou misdona  
 That thus thy gentle life is levelled at? 200

127 stead us much: 'give us useful information' (White)  
 132 eighteen pence ordinary: fixed price of the meal in the  
 ordinary  
 136 Go to: exclamation of protest  
 138 and: if  
 141 urge: bring to attention  
 148 known Q<sub>2</sub>, Q<sub>3</sub> (kowne Q<sub>1</sub>)  
 158 Sith: since  
 discover: reveal  
 160 complot: plot  
 under hand: in secret  
 162 roundly: promptly

164 Destinies: i.e. the three Fates, goddesses who presided  
 over people's births, lives and deaths  
 166 member: helper  
 169 train: lure  
 171 nice: squeamish, coy  
 178 apparently: plainly  
 181 challenge: deserve, claim  
 deserts of: deeds from  
 184 against you come: in anticipation of your coming  
 SD *Manet*: remains  
 199 harmless: innocent  
 200 levelled: aimed

The many good turns that thou hast done to me  
 Now must I quittance with betraying thee.  
 I, that should take the weapon in my hand  
 And buckler thee from ill-intending foes,  
 Do lead thee with a wicked, fraudulent smile,  
 As unsuspected to the slaughterhouse.  
 So have I sworn to Mosby and my mistress,  
 So have I promised to the slaughtermen;  
 And should I not deal currently with them,  
 Their lawless rage would take revenge on me. 210  
 Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once.  
 Let pity lodge where feeble women lie;  
 I am resolved, and Arden needs must die.

*Exit* MICHAEL

## Scene iv

*Here enters* ARDEN *and* FRANKLIN

ARDEN No, Franklin, no. If fear or stormy threats,  
 If love of me or care of womanhood,  
 If fear of God or common speech of men,  
 Who mangle credit with their wounding words  
 And couch dishonour as dishonour buds,  
 Might 'join repentance in her wanton thoughts,  
 No question then but she would turn the leaf  
 And sorrow for her dissolution.  
 But she is rooted in her wickedness,  
 Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed.  
 Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,  
 And reprehension makes her vice to grow  
 As Hydra's head that plenished by decay.  
 Her faults, methink, are painted in my face  
 For every searching eye to overread;  
 And Mosby's name, a scandal unto mine,  
 Is deeply trenched in my blushing brow.

202 quittance: repay

204 buckler: shield

209 currently: honestly, faithfully

4 credit: honour, reputation

5 couch: eds disagree on the exact meaning of this word in the context of this line, pointing to such relevant variant meanings as 'spread', 'cause to germinate', 'embroider', 'plant out in the earth' and 'give expression to'. All these definitions, however, indicate that the general sense of the line concerns the deliberate cultivation or encouragement of dishonourable acts

6 'join: enjoin

8 dissolution: dissolute living

13 Hydra's head . . . decay: 'the second labour of Hercules was to kill the Lernaean Hydra, an enormous serpent with nine heads, each of which was *replenished* with two more when cut off' (White). Wine suggests 'by decay' might mean 'by decapitation'

plenished: eds (perisht Q<sub>5</sub>)

17 trenched: cut

Ah, Franklin, Franklin, when I think on this,  
 My heart's grief rends my other powers  
 Worse than the conflict at the hour of death. 20

FRANKLIN Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament.  
 She will amend, and so your griefs will cease;  
 Or else she'll die, and so your sorrows end.  
 If neither of these two do haply fall,  
 Yet let your comfort be that others bear  
 Your woes twice doubled all with patience.

ARDEN My house is irksome; there I cannot rest.

FRANKLIN Then stay with me in London; go not home.

ARDEN Then that base Mosby doth usurp my room  
 And makes his triumph of my being thence. 30

At home or not at home, where'er I be,  
 Here, here it lies (*points to his heart*), ah, Franklin,  
 here it lies

That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

*Here enters* MICHAEL

FRANKLIN Forget your griefs awhile; here comes your man.

ARDEN What o'clock is't, sirrah?

MICHAEL Almost ten.

ARDEN See, see how runs away the weary time.

Come, Master Franklin, shall we go to bed?

*Exeunt* ARDEN *and* MICHAEL. *Manet* FRANKLIN

FRANKLIN I pray you, go before; I'll follow you.  
 Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy!

What pity-moving words, what deep-fetched sighs, 40

What grievous groans and overlading woes  
 Accompanies this gentle gentleman.

Now will he shake his care-oppressed head,

Then fix his sad eyes on the sullen earth,

Ashamed to gaze upon the open world;

Now will he cast his eyes up towards the heavens,

Looking that ways for redress of wrong.

Sometimes he seeketh to beguile his grief,

And tells a story with his careful tongue;

Then comes his wife's dishonour in his thoughts 50

And in the middle cutteth off his tale,

Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.

So woe-begone, so inly charged with woe,

Was never any lived and bare it so.

*Here enters* MICHAEL

MICHAEL My master would desire you come to bed.

FRANKLIN Is he himself already in his bed?

*Exit* FRANKLIN. *Manet* MICHAEL

24 fall: befall

40 moving Q<sub>2</sub>, Q<sub>3</sub> (moning Q<sub>1</sub>)

48 beguile: divert attention from

49 careful: full of care

54 Was: i.e. there was



ANON.

MICHAEL He is and fain would have the light away.  
Conflicting thoughts encamped in my breast  
Awake me with the echo of their strokes;  
And I, a judge to censure either side,  
60 Can give to neither wished victory.  
My master's kindness pleads to me for life  
With just demand, and I must grant it him;  
My mistress she hath forced me with an oath,  
For Susan's sake the which I may not break,  
For that is nearer than a master's love;  
That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,  
And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem—  
Two rougher ruffians never lived in Kent—  
Have sworn my death if I infringe my vow,  
A dreadful thing to be considered of.  
Methinks I see them with their boltered hair,  
Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,  
And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,  
Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths  
Whilst thou, submissive, pleading for relief,  
Art mangled by their ireful instruments.  
Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,  
And pitiless Black Will cries 'Stab the slave!  
The peasant will detect the tragedy.'  
The wrinkles in his foul, death-threat'ning face  
Gapes open wide, like graves to swallow men.  
My death to him is but a merriment,  
And he will murder me to make him sport.  
He comes, he comes! Ah, Master Franklin, help!  
Call up the neighbours or we are but dead.

*Here enters FRANKLIN and ARDEN*

FRANKLIN What dismal outcry calls me from my rest?

ARDEN What hath occasioned such a fearful cry?

Speak, Michael! Hath any injured thee?

MICHAEL Nothing, sir; but as I fell asleep  
90 Upon the threshold, leaning to the stairs,  
I had a fearful dream that troubled me,  
And in my slumber thought I was beset  
With murderer thieves that came to rifle me.  
My trembling joints witness my inward fear.  
I crave your pardons for disturbing you.

ARDEN So great a cry for nothing I ne'er heard.

What, are the doors fast locked and all things safe?

MICHAEL I cannot tell; I think I locked the doors.

72 boltered: in tangled knots, matted (as in 'blood-boltered Banquo', *Macbeth*, IV.i.123). However, Qs' spelling (bolstred) may be correct, suggesting 'stiff, rigid, bristly' (Wine)

75 Insulting: exulting  
peck: heap

80 detect: disclose, reveal

91 leaning to: leaning against

94 rifle: rob

ARDEN I like not this, but I'll go see myself. 100

*He tries the doors*

Ne'er trust me but the doors were all unlocked.

This negligence not half contenteth me.

Get you to bed, and if you love my favour

Let me have no more such pranks as these.

Come, Master Franklin, let us go to bed.

FRANKLIN Ay, by my faith; the air is very cold.

Michael, farewell; I pray thee dream no more.

*Exeunt*

## Scene v

70 *Here enters BLACK WILL, GREENE, and SHAKEBAG*

SHAKEBAG Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,

And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth

And with the black fold of her cloudy robe

Obscures us from the eyesight of the world,

In which sweet silence such as we triumph.

The lazy minutes linger on their time,

Loth to give due audit to the hour,

Till in the watch our purpose be complete,

And Arden sent to everlasting night.

80 Greene, get you gone and linger here about, 10

And at some hour hence come to us again,

Where we will give you instance of his death.

GREENE Speed to my wish whose will so'er says no;

And so I'll leave you for an hour or two. *Exit GREENE*

BLACK WILL I tell thee, Shakebag, would this thing  
were done;

I am so heavy that I can scarce go.

This drowsiness in me bodes little good.

SHAKEBAG How now, Will, become a precisian?

Nay, then, let's go sleep when bugs and fears

Shall kill our courages with their fancy's work. 20

BLACK WILL Why, Shakebag, thou mistakes me much

And wrongs me too in telling me of fear.

Wert not a serious thing we go about,

It should be slipped till I had fought with thee

To let thee know I am no coward, I.

I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.

SHAKEBAG Why, thy speech bewrayed an inly kind of  
fear,

2 sheeting: enfolding

8 watch: one of the periods into which the night was divided

12 instance: evidence

13 Speed: success  
whose will . . . no: 'no matter who wills the contrary'  
(eds)

18 precisian: puritan

19 bugs: bugbears, terrors

20 fancy's work: effect on our imaginations

22 telling: accusing (White)

24 slipped: deferred

27 bewrayed: revealed

And savoured of a weak, relenting spirit.  
 Go forward now in that we have begun,  
 And afterwards attempt me when thou darest. 30  
 BLACK WILL And if I do not, heaven cut me off!  
 But let that pass, and show me to this house,  
 Where thou shalt see I'll do as much as Shakebag.  
 SHAKEBAG This is the door (*He tries it*) —but soft,  
 methinks 'tis shut.  
 The villain Michael hath deceived us.  
 BLACK WILL Soft, let me see. Shakebag, 'tis shut  
 indeed.  
 Knock with thy sword; perhaps the slave will hear.  
 SHAKEBAG It will not be; the white-livered peasant  
 Is gone to bed and laughs us both to scorn.  
 BLACK WILL And he shall buy his merriment as dear 40  
 As ever coistrel bought so little sport.  
 Ne'er let this sword assist me when I need,  
 But rust and canker after I have sworn,  
 If I, the next time that I meet the hind,  
 Lop not away his leg, his arm, or both.  
 SHAKEBAG And let me never draw a sword again,  
 Nor prosper in the twilight, cockshut light,  
 When I would fleece the wealthy passenger,  
 But lie and languish in a loathsome den,  
 Hated and spit at by the goers-by, 50  
 And in that death may die unpitied  
 If I, the next time that I meet the slave,  
 Cut not the nose from off the coward's face  
 And trample on it for this villainy.  
 BLACK WILL Come, let's go seek out Greene; I know  
 he'll swear.  
 SHAKEBAG He were a villain and he would not swear.  
 'Twould make a peasant swear amongst his boys,  
 That ne'er durst say before but 'yea' and 'no',  
 To be thus flouted of a coisterel.  
 BLACK WILL Shakebag, let's seek out Greene, and in  
 the morning, 60  
 At the alehouse 'butting Arden's house,  
 Watch the out-coming of that prick-eared cur,  
 And then let me alone to handle him.

*Exeunt*

30 attempt: attack, engage with  
 38 white-livered: cowardly  
 41 coistrel: knave; see l. 59 for variant spelling  
 44 hind: fellow  
 47 cockshut light: 'evening time when (a) poultry are shut  
 up for the night or, more appropriately, (b) woodcocks  
 (i.e. gulls) "shoot" or fly through the woods and are  
 caught in nets' (Wine)  
 48 passenger: passer-by  
 56 and: if  
 62 prick-eared: with pointed ears

## Scene vi

30 *Here enters* ARDEN, FRANKLIN, *and* MICHAEL

ARDEN Sirrah, get you back to Billingsgate  
 And learn what time the tide will serve our turn.  
 Come to us in Paul's. First go make the bed,  
 And afterwards go hearken for the flood.

*Exit* MICHAEL

Come, Master Franklin, you shall go with me.  
 This night I dreamed that being in a park,  
 A toil was pitched to overthrow the deer,  
 And I upon a little rising hill  
 Stood whistly watching for the herd's approach.  
 Even there, methoughts, a gentle slumber took me, 10  
 And summoned all my parts to sweet repose.  
 But in the pleasure of this golden rest  
 An ill-thewed foster had removed the toil,  
 And rounded me with that beguiling home  
 Which late, methought, was pitched to cast the deer.  
 With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,  
 And at the noise another herdman came  
 With falchion drawn, and bent it at my breast,  
 Crying aloud, 'Thou art the game we seek.'  
 With this I waked and trembled every joint, 20  
 Like one obscured in a little bush  
 That sees a lion foraging about,  
 And when the dreadful forest king is gone,  
 He pries about with timorous suspect  
 Throughout the thorny casements of the brake,  
 And will not think his person dangerless,  
 But quakes and shivers though the cause be gone.  
 So trust me, Franklin, when I did awake  
 I stood in doubt whether I waked or no,  
 Such great impression took this fond surprise. 30  
 God grant this vision bedeed me any good.  
 FRANKLIN This fantasy doth rise from Michael's fear,  
 Who being awaked with the noise he made,  
 His troubled senses yet could take no rest;  
 And this, I warrant you, procured your dream.  
 ARDEN It may be so; God frame it to the best!

1 Billingsgate: landing place used by travellers from abroad  
 or from the lower reaches of the Thames

7 toil: net

pitched: fixed in place

9 whistly: silently

13 ill-thewed foster: ill-natured forester

14 rounded: surrounded

beguiling home: i.e. the net

15 cast: overthrow

18 falchion: a curved broadsword

24 suspect: suspicion, apprehension

25 brake: thicket

30 took . . . surprise: 'this foolish terror gave me' (eds)

31 bedeed . . . good: 'foretells no danger for me' (White)

36 frame: bring about

ANON.

But oftentimes my dreams presage too true.  
FRANKLIN To such as note their nightly fantasies,  
Some one in twenty may incur belief.  
But use it not; 'tis but a mockery. 40  
ARDEN Come, Master Franklin, we'll now walk in  
Paul's,  
And dine together at the ordinary,  
And by my man's direction draw to the quay,  
And with the tide go down to Faversham.  
Say, Master Franklin, shall it not be so?  
FRANKLIN At your good pleasure, sir; I'll bear you  
company

*Exeunt*

## Scene vii

*Here enters MICHAEL at one door. Here enters GREENE, BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG at another door*

BLACK WILL Draw, Shakebag, for here's that villain  
Michael.  
GREENE First, Will, let's hear what he can say.  
BLACK WILL Speak, milksop slave, and never after  
speak!  
MICHAEL For God's sake, sirs, let me excuse myself,  
For here I swear by heaven and earth and all,  
I did perform the outmost of my task,  
And left the doors unbolted and unlocked.  
But see the chance: Franklin and my master  
Were very late conferring in the porch,  
And Franklin left his napkin where he sat, 10  
With certain gold knit in it, as he said.  
Being in bed he did bethink himself,  
And coming down he found the doors unshut.  
He locked the gates and brought away the keys,  
For which offence my master rated me.  
But now I am going to see what flood it is,  
For with the tide my master will away,  
Where you may front him well on Rainham Down,  
A place well-fitting such a stratagem.  
BLACK WILL Your excuse hath somewhat mollified my  
choler. 20  
Why now, Greene, 'tis better now nor e'er it was.

40 use it not: 'do not engage in such a practice' (White)

43 quay: i.e. at Billingsgate

3 milksop: cowardly

6 outmost: utmost

8 chance: mischance

10 napkin: handkerchief

11 knit: tied up

15 rated: berated

18 front: confront

Rainham Down: open countryside around Rainham, a Kent village about 5 miles from Rochester, notorious for its ruffians and highwaymen

21 nor: than

GREENE But, Michael, is this true?  
MICHAEL As true as I report it to be true.  
SHAKEBAG Then, Michael, this shall be your penance:  
To feast us all at the Salutation,  
Where we will plot our purpose thoroughly.  
GREENE And, Michael, you shall bear no news of this  
tide  
Because they two may be in Rainham Down  
Before your master.  
MICHAEL Why, I'll agree to anything you'll have me, 30  
So you will except of my company.

*Exeunt*

## Scene viii

*Here enters MOSBY*

MOSBY Disturbed thoughts drives me from company  
And dries my marrow with their watchfulness.  
Continual trouble of my moody brain  
Feebles my body by excess of drink  
And nips me as the bitter north-east wind  
Doth check the tender blossoms in the spring.  
Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,  
That tables not with foul suspicion;  
And he but pines amongst his delicates  
Whose troubled mind is stuffed with discontent. 10  
My golden time was when I had no gold;  
Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure;  
My daily toil begat me night's repose,  
My night's repose made daylight fresh to me.  
But since I climbed the top bough of the tree  
And sought to build my nest among the clouds,  
Each gentle starry gale doth shake my bed  
And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.  
But whither doth contemplation carry me?  
The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells, 20  
Is hedged behind me that I cannot back  
But needs must on, although to danger's gate.  
Then, Arden, perish thou by that decree,  
For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up  
To make my harvest nothing but pure corn.

25 Salutation: a tavern in Newgate Street (White)

31 except Q<sub>1</sub>, Q<sub>2</sub> (accept Q<sub>3</sub>). Either reading is possible, but most eds agree on 'except' on the grounds of Michael's desire (iii.190) not to be seen in the cut-throats' company

7 cates: choice food

8 tables: dines

9 delicates: delicacies

17 Each gentle starry gale: Q<sub>s</sub> read 'starry'; we follow Wine in emending to 'starry'. Some eds propose 'Each gentlest airy gale' instead, but the sense of Wine's version does not seem problematic enough to warrant such a change, even though it offers a greater clarity of meaning

24 ear: plough

And for his pains I'll heave him up awhile  
 And, after, smother him to have his wax;  
 Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.  
 Then is there Michael and the painter too,  
 Chief actors to Arden's overthrow,  
 Who, when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat,  
 They will insult upon me for my meed,  
 Or fright me by detecting of his end.  
 I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone  
 To make these curs pluck out each other's throat,  
 And then am I sole ruler of mine own.  
 Yet Mistress Arden lives; but she's myself,  
 And holy church rites makes us two but one.  
 But what for that I may not trust you, Alice?  
 You have supplanted Arden for my sake,  
 And will extirpen me to plant another.  
 'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed,  
 And I will cleanly rid my hands of her.

*Here enters ALICE with a prayerbook*

But here she comes, and I must flatter her.  
 How now, Alice! What, sad and passionate?  
 Make me partaker of thy pensiveness;  
 Fire divided burns with lesser force.

ALICE But I will dam that fire in my breast  
 Till by the force thereof my part consume.  
 Ah, Mosby!

MOSBY Such deep pathaires, like to a cannon's burst  
 Discharged against a ruined wall,  
 Breaks my relenting heart in thousand pieces.  
 Ungentle Alice, thy sorrow is my sore;  
 Thou know'st it well, and 'tis thy policy  
 To forge distressful looks to wound a breast  
 Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad.  
 It is not love that loves to anger love.

ALICE It is not love that loves to murder love.

MOSBY How mean you that?

ALICE Thou knowest how dearly Arden loved me.

MOSBY And then?

ALICE And then—conceal the rest, for 'tis too bad,  
 Lest that my words be carried with the wind  
 And published in the world to both our shames.  
 I pray thee, Mosby, let our springtime wither;

26 heave him up: extol

27 smother: smoke. The line refers to the practice of smoking out bees to reach their wax and honey

32 meed: reward

34 a bone: i.e. Susan

39 what for that: what about the fact that

41 extirpen: root out

45 passionate: sorrowful

48-9 But I . . . consume: 'I will suppress the passion that I have for you . . . until by the force of its own violence it consumes itself and disappears' (Wine)

51 pathaires: sad and passionate outbursts

Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.  
 Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwixt us,  
 For now I blush and tremble at the thoughts.

MOSBY What, are you changed?

30 ALICE Ay, to my former happy life again,  
 From title of an odious strumpet's name  
 To honest Arden's wife, not Arden's honest wife.  
 Ha, Mosby, 'tis thou hast rifled me of that,  
 And made me sland'rous to all my kin.

Even in my forehead is thy name engraven,  
 A mean artificer, that low-born name.  
 I was bewitched; woe worth the hapless hour  
 And all the causes that enchanted me!

MOSBY Nay, if thou ban, let me breathe curses forth, 80  
 And, if you stand so nicely at your fame,  
 Let me repent the credit I have lost.

I have neglected matters of import  
 That would have stated me above thy state,  
 Forslowed advantages, and spurned at time.  
 Ay, Fortune's right hand Mosby hath forsook  
 To take a wanton giglot by the left.  
 I left the marriage of an honest maid  
 Whose dowry would have weighed down all thy  
 wealth,

Whose beauty and demeanour far exceeded thee. 90  
 This certain good I lost for changing bad,  
 And wrapped my credit in thy company.

50 I was bewitched—that is no theme of thine!—  
 And thou unhallowed hast enchanted me.  
 But I will break thy spells and exorcisms,  
 And put another sight upon these eyes  
 That showed my heart a raven for a dove.

Thou art not fair, I viewed thee not till now;  
 Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not.  
 And now the rain hath beaten off thy guilt

60 Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit.  
 It grieves me not to see how foul thou art,  
 But mads me that ever I thought thee fair.

Go, get thee gone, a copesmate for thy hinds!  
 I am too good to be thy favourite.

ALICE Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true,  
 Which often hath been told me by my friends,  
 That Mosby loves me not but for my wealth,

73 honest [2nd instance]: chaste (as in l. 88)

78 woe worth: a curse upon

80 ban: curse

81 stand . . . fame: scruple so fastidiously at your reputation (eds)

84 stated: placed, raised

85 Forslowed: wasted

87 giglot: lewd, wanton woman

94 unhallowed: wicked

95 exorcisms: spells

104 copesmate: companion (in contemptuous sense)  
 hinds: servants

Which too incredulous I ne'er believed.  
 Nay, hear me speak, Mosby, a word or two;  
 I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.  
 Look on me, Mosby, or I'll kill myself;  
 Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.  
 If thou cry war there is no peace for me;  
 I will do penance for offending thee  
 And burn this prayerbook, where I here use  
 The holy word that had converted me.  
 See, Mosby, I will tear away the leaves,  
 And all the leaves, and in this golden cover  
 Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell,  
 And thereon will I chiefly meditate  
 And hold no other sect but such devotion.  
 Wilt thou not look? Is all thy love overwhelmed?  
 Wilt thou not hear? What malice stops thine ears?  
 Why speaks thou not? What silence ties thy tongue?  
 Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is,  
 And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,  
 And spoke as smoothly as an orator,  
 When I have bid thee hear, or see, or speak.  
 And art thou sensible in none of these?  
 Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault  
 And I deserve not Mosby's muddy looks.  
 A fount once troubled is not thickened still;  
 Be clear again, I'll ne'er more trouble thee.

MOSBY Oh, no, I am a base artificer,  
 My wings are feathered for a lowly flight.  
 Mosby? Fie, no! Not for a thousand pound.  
 Make love to you? Why, 'tis unpardonable;  
 We beggars must not breathe where gentles are.

ALICE Sweet Mosby is as gentle as a king,  
 And I too blind to judge him otherwise.  
 Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands,  
 Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns;  
 So whatso'er my Mosby's father was,  
 Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

MOSBY Ah, how you women can insinuate,  
 And clear a trespass with your sweet-set tongue.  
 I will forget this quarrel, gentle Alice,  
 Provided I'll be tempted so no more.

*Here enters BRADSHAW*

ALICE Then with thy lips seal up this new-made  
 match.

MOSBY Soft, Alice, for here comes somebody.

ALICE How now, Bradshaw, what's the news with you?

122 hold . . . sect: keep no other religious faith (eds)  
 127 quickly: sharply  
 130 sensible: capable of feeling  
 131 thy good turns: good turns done to you  
 133 A fount once troubled: eds (A fence of trouble Qs)  
 still: for ever  
 139 gentles: people of gentle birth  
 147 clear a trespass: acquit yourselves

BRADSHAW I have little news, but here's a letter  
 That Master Greene importuned me to give you.

ALICE Go in, Bradshaw; call for a cup of beer.  
 'Tis almost suppertime; thou shalt stay with us.  
*Exit BRADSHAW. Then she reads the letter*  
 'We have missed of our purpose at London, but shall  
 perform it by the way. We thank our neighbour  
 Bradshaw.

Yours, Richard Greene.'

How likes my love the tenor of this letter? 160

MOSBY Well, were his date complete and expired.

ALICE Ah, would it were! Then comes my happy hour.  
 Till then my bliss is mixed with bitter gall.  
 Come, let us in to shun suspicion.

MOSBY Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee.

*Exeunt*

## Scene ix

*Here enters GREENE, BLACK WILL, and SHAKEBAG*

SHAKEBAG Come, Will, see thy tools be in a readiness.  
 Is not thy powder dank, or will thy flint strike fire?

BLACK WILL Then ask me if my nose be on my face,  
 Or whether my tongue be frozen in my mouth.  
 Zounds, here's a coil!  
 You were best swear me on the intergatories  
 How many pistols I have took in hand,  
 Or whether I love the smell of gunpowder,  
 Or dare abide the noise the dag will make,  
 Or will not wink at flashing of the fire. 10

I pray thee, Shakebag, let this answer thee,  
 That I have took more purses in this Down  
 Than e'er thou handlest pistols in thy life.

SHAKEBAG Ay, haply thou hast picked more in a  
 throng;  
 But should I brag what booties I have took,  
 I think the overplus that's more than thine  
 Would mount to a greater sum of money  
 Than either thou or all thy kin are worth.  
 Zounds, I hate them as I hate a toad  
 That carry a muscado in their tongue 20  
 And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand.

BLACK WILL Oh Greene, intolerable!  
 It is not for mine honour to bear this.

SD *the letter*: this was, in fact, written in scene ii, before the  
 failed attempts on Arden's life in London  
 161 his date: his (i.e. Arden's) term of life  
 5 coil: fuss  
 6 intergatories: interrogatories: i.e. questions put to  
 someone under oath  
 9 dag: pistol  
 10 wink: blink  
 16 overplus: surplus  
 20 muscado: musket

Why, Shakebag, I did serve the king at Boulogne,  
 And thou canst brag of nothing that thou has done.  
 SHAKEBAG Why, so can Jack of Faversham,  
 That sounded for a fillip on the nose,  
 When he that gave it him holloed in his ear,  
 And he supposed a cannon-bullet hit him.

*Then they fight*

GREENE I pray you, sirs, list to Aesop's talk: 30  
 Whilst two stout dogs were striving for a bone,  
 There comes a cur and stole it from them both;  
 So, while you stand striving on these terms of  
 manhood,  
 Arden escapes us and deceives us all.

SHAKEBAG Why, he begun.

BLACK WILL And thou shalt find I'll end.  
 I do but slip it until better time.  
 But if I do forget—

*Then he kneels down and holds up his hands to heaven*

GREENE Well, take your fittest standings, and once  
 more

Lime your twigs to catch this weary bird.  
 I'll leave you, and at your dag's discharge 40  
 Make towards, like the longing water-dog  
 That coucheth till the fowling-piece be off,  
 Then seizeth on the prey with eager mood.  
 Ah, might I see him stretching forth his limbs  
 As I have seen them beat their wings ere now.

SHAKEBAG Why, that thou shalt see if he come this way.

GREENE Yes, that he doth, Shakebag, I warrant thee.  
 But brawl not when I am gone in any case,  
 But, sirs, be sure to speed him when he comes;  
 And in that hope I'll leave you for an hour. 50

*Exit GREENE*

BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG take up their positions

*Here enters ARDEN, FRANKLIN, and MICHAEL*

MICHAEL 'Twere best that I went back to Rochester.  
 The horse halts downright; it were not good  
 He travelled in such pain to Faversham.  
 Removing of a shoe may haply help it.

ARDEN Well, get you back to Rochester; but, sirrah,  
 see ye

27 sounded: swooned  
 fillip: punch  
 28 holloed: shouted  
 31 stout: valiant  
 36 slip: postpone  
 38 fittest standings: see iii.39n  
 39 Lime your twigs: birdlime was a sticky substance spread  
 on twigs to catch birds  
 weary: wearisome  
 41 water-dog: dog trained to retrieve water-fowl  
 42 coucheth: lies down  
 fowling-piece: gun  
 52 halts downright: limps badly

Overtake us ere we come to Rainham Down,  
 For it will be very late ere we get home.  
 MICHAEL (*Aside*) Ay, God he knows, and so doth Will  
 and Shakebag,  
 That thou shalt never go further than that Down;  
 And therefore have I pricked the horse on purpose, 60  
 Because I would not view the massacre.

*Exit MICHAEL*

ARDEN Come, Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.

FRANKLIN I assure you, sir, you task me much.

A heavy blood is gathered at my heart,  
 And on the sudden is my wind so short  
 As hindereth the passage of my speech.  
 So fierce a qualm yet ne'er assailed me.

ARDEN Come, Master Franklin, let us go on softly.

The annoyance of the dust or else some meat  
 You ate at dinner cannot brook with you. 70  
 I have been often so and soon amended.

FRANKLIN Do you remember where my tale did leave?

ARDEN Ay, where the gentleman did check his wife.

FRANKLIN She being reprehended for the fact,  
 Witness produced that took her with the deed,  
 Her glove brought in which there she left behind,  
 And many other assured arguments,  
 Her husband asked her whether it were not so.

ARDEN Her answer then? I wonder how she looked,  
 Having forsworn it with such vehement oaths, 80  
 And at the instant so approved upon her.

FRANKLIN First did she cast her eyes down to the earth,  
 Watching the drops that fell amain from thence;  
 Then softly draws she forth her handkerchief,  
 And modestly she wipes her tear-stained face;  
 Then hemmed she out, to clear her voice should  
 seem,

And with a majesty addressed herself  
 To encounter all their accusations.

Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more;  
 This fighting at my heart makes short my wind. 90

ARDEN Come, we are almost now at Rainham Down.

Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way;  
 I would you were in state to tell it out.

SHAKEBAG (*Aside*) Stand close, Will, I hear them  
 coming.

*Here enters LORD CHEINY with his MEN*

60 pricked the horse: pierced the foot of the horse to cause  
 lameness  
 68 softly: slowly  
 70 brook with: agree with  
 72 leave: leave off  
 73 check: reprove  
 75 took . . . deed: caught her in the act  
 81 approved upon: proved against  
 86 hemmed she out: she cleared her throat  
 88 encounter: counter

ANON.

BLACK WILL (*Aside*) Stand to it, Shakebag, and be resolute.  
LORD CHEINY Is it so near night as it seems,  
Or will this black-faced evening have a shower?  
(*Seeing* ARDEN) What, Master Arden? You are well met.  
I have longed this fortnight's day to speak with you.  
You are a stranger, man, in the Isle of Sheppey. 100  
ARDEN Your honour's always! Bound to do you service.  
LORD CHEINY Come you from London and ne'er a man with you?  
ARDEN My man's coming after,  
But here's my honest friend that came along with me.  
LORD CHEINY (*To* FRANKLIN) My Lord Protector's man I take you to be.  
FRANKLIN Ay, my good lord, and highly bound to you.  
LORD CHEINY You and your friend come home and sup with me.  
ARDEN I beseech your honour pardon me;  
I have made a promise to a gentleman,  
My honest friend, to meet him at my house. 110  
The occasion is great, or else would I wait on you.  
LORD CHEINY Will you come tomorrow and dine with me,  
And bring your honest friend along with you?  
I have divers matters to talk with you about.  
ARDEN Tomorrow we'll wait upon your honour.  
LORD CHEINY One of you stay my horse at the top of the hill. *Seeing* BLACK WILL  
What, Black Will! For whose purse wait you?  
Thou wilt be hanged in Kent when all is done.  
BLACK WILL Not hanged, God save your honour.  
I am your beadsman, bound to pray for you. 120  
LORD CHEINY I think thou ne'er saidest prayer in all thy life.  
One of you give him a crown.  
And, sirrah, leave this kind of life.  
If thou beest 'tainted for a penny matter  
And come in question, surely thou wilt truss.  
Come, Master Arden, let us be going;  
Your way and mine lies four mile together.  
*Exeunt. Manet* BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG  
BLACK WILL The devil break all your necks at four miles' end!  
Zounds, I could kill myself for very anger!  
His lordship chops me in even when 130  
My dag was levelled at his heart.  
I would his crown were molten down his throat.  
SHAKEBAG Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck.

120 beadsman: one paid to pray for others  
124-5 If . . . truss: i.e. 'If you are caught and accused of even the most trivial offence and come to trial, you will surely hang' (Wine)  
130 chops me in: suddenly interrupts

Did ever man escape as thou hast done?  
Well, I'll discharge my pistol at the sky,  
For by this bullet Arden might not die.

*Here enters* GREENE

GREENE What, is he down? Is he dispatched?  
SHAKEBAG Ay, in health towards Faversham to shame us all.  
GREENE The devil he is! Why, sirs, how escaped he?  
SHAKEBAG When we were ready to shoot 140  
Comes my Lord Cheiny to prevent his death.  
GREENE The Lord of Heaven hath preserved him.  
BLACK WILL The Lord of Heaven a fig! The Lord Cheiny hath preserved him,  
And bids him to a feast, to his house at Shorlow.  
But by the way once more I'll meet with him,  
And if all the Cheinies in the world say no,  
I'll have a bullet in his breast tomorrow.  
Therefore come, Greene, and let us to Faversham.  
GREENE Ay, and excuse ourselves to Mistress Arden.  
Oh, how she'll chafe when she hears of this! 150  
SHAKEBAG Why, I'll warrant you she'll think we dare not do it.  
BLACK WILL Why then let us go and tell her all the matter,  
And plot the news to cut him off tomorrow.

*Exeunt*

## Scene x

*Here enters* ARDEN *and his wife* ALICE, FRANKLIN *and* MICHAEL

ARDEN See how the Hours, the guardant of heaven's gate,  
Have by their toil removed the darksome clouds,  
That Sol may well discern the trampled pace  
Wherein he went to guide his golden car.  
The season fits; come, Franklin, let's away.  
ALICE I thought you did pretend some special hunt  
That made you thus cut short the time of rest.  
ARDEN It was no chase that made me rise so early,  
But, as I told thee yesternight, to go

143 The Lord . . . fig!: eds (Preserved, a fig! Qs)  
144 Shorlow: Shurland, on the Isle of Sheppey, Lord Cheiny's residence  
153 plot the news: devise a new plan (White)  
1 the Hours: allusion to the daughters of Zeus and Themis, who were the guardians of the gates of Olympus, and presided over the changes of the seasons and of the weather  
guardant: guardian  
3 Sol: the sun personified  
discern Q3 (deserve Q1, Q2)  
pace: path, passage  
6 pretend: intend

- To the Isle of Sheppey, there to dine with my Lord  
Cheiny, 10  
For so his honour late commanded me.
- ALICE Ay, such kind husbands seldom want excuses.  
Home is a wild cat to a wand'ring wit.  
The time hath been—would God it were not past—  
That honour's title nor a lord's command  
Could once have drawn you from these arms of mine.  
But my deserts or your desires decay,  
Or both; yet if true love may seem desert,  
I merit still to have thy company.
- FRANKLIN Why, I pray you, sir, let her go along with us;  
I am sure his honour will welcome her, 21  
And us the more for bringing her along.
- ARDEN Content. (*To* MICHAEL) Sirrah, saddle your  
mistress' nag.
- ALICE No. Begged favour merits little thanks.  
If I should go our house would run away  
Or else be stol'n; therefore I'll stay behind.
- ARDEN Nay, see how mistaking you are. I pray thee, go.
- ALICE No, no, not now.
- ARDEN Then let me leave thee satisfied in this, 30  
That time nor place nor persons alter me,  
But that I hold thee dearer than my life.
- ALICE That will be seen by your quick return.
- ARDEN And that shall be ere night and if I live.  
Farewell, sweet Alice; we mind to sup with thee.
- Exit* ALICE
- FRANKLIN Come, Michael, are our horses ready?
- MICHAEL Ay, your horses are ready, but I am not  
ready, for I have lost my purse with six-and-thirty  
shillings in it, with taking up of my master's nag.
- FRANKLIN Why, I pray you, let us go before,  
Whilst he stays behind to seek his purse. 40
- ARDEN Go to, sirrah! See you follow us to the Isle of  
Sheppey,  
To my Lord Cheiny's, where we mean to dine.
- Exeunt* ARDEN *and* FRANKLIN. *Manet* MICHAEL
- MICHAEL So, fair weather after you, for before you lies  
Black Will and Shakebag in the broom close, too  
close for you. They'll be your ferrymen to long home.
- Here enters the Painter* CLARKE
- But who is this? The painter, my corrival, that would  
needs win Mistress Susan.
- CLARKE How now, Michael? How doth my mistress  
and all at home? 51
- MICHAEL Who? Susan Mosby? She is your mistress,  
too?
- CLARKE Ay. How doth she and all the rest?
- MICHAEL All's well but Susan; she is sick.
- CLARKE Sick? Of what disease?
- MICHAEL Of a great fear.
- CLARKE A fear of what?
- MICHAEL A great fever.
- CLARKE A fever! God forbid!
- MICHAEL Yes, faith, and of a lurdan, too, as big as 60  
yourself.
- CLARKE Oh, Michael, the spleen prickles you. Go to;  
you carry an eye over Mistress Susan.
- MICHAEL Ay, faith, to keep her from the painter.
- CLARKE Why more from a painter than from a serving-  
creature like yourself?
- MICHAEL Because you painters make but a painting-  
table of a pretty wench and spoil her beauty with  
blotting.
- CLARKE What mean you by that?
- MICHAEL Why, that you painters paint lambs in the  
lining of wench's petticoats, and we servingmen put  
horns to them to make them become sheep. 72
- CLARKE Such another word will cost you a cuff or a  
knock.
- MICHAEL What, with a dagger made of a pencil? Faith,  
'tis too weak, and therefore thou too weak to win  
Susan.
- CLARKE Would Susan's love lay upon this stroke!  
*Then he breaks* MICHAEL's head
- Here enters* MOSBY, GREENE *and* ALICE
- ALICE I'll lay my life this is for Susan's love.  
(*To* MICHAEL) Stayed you behind your master to this  
end? 80  
Have you no other time to brabble in

12 want: lack

17 deserts: merits

desires: eds (deserves Q1; deserves Q2; deserves Q3)

18 desert: deserving

25-6 house . . . stol'n: i.e. household matters would get out of  
hand, and the house might be robbed

33 and if: if

34 mind: intend

38 taking up: 'to bring (a horse, ox etc.) from pasture into  
the stable' (OED)

44 broom close: enclosed field of shrubs

45 ferrymen: i.e. Charon, who ferried the dead across the  
River Styx to Hades

long home: i.e. the grave

46 corrival: rival in love (OED)

59 lurdan: loafer, rascal (with a play on 'fever-lurden', the  
disease of laziness)61 spleen: irritability  
prickles: goads

62 carry . . . over: have your eye on

66-7 painting-table: 'a board or flat surface on which a  
picture is painted; hence, the picture itself' (OED)70-2 Why . . . sheep: meaning obscure, but eds agree that the  
jibe concerns the sexual rivalry between Michael and  
Clarke; 'horns' refers either to a cuckold's horns or to an  
erect penis

81 brabble: brawl



ANON.

But now, when serious matters are in hand?  
Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised?

CLARKE Ay, here it is; the very touch is death.

ALICE Then this, I hope, if all the rest do fail,  
Will catch Master Arden

And make him wise in death that lived a fool.

Why should he thrust his sickle in our corn,

Or what hath he to do with thee, my love,

Or govern me that am to rule myself?

Forsooth, for credit sake I must leave thee!

Nay, he must leave to live that we may love,

May live, may love; for what is life but love?

And love shall last as long as life remains,

And life shall end before my love depart.

MOSBY Why, what's love without true constancy?

Like to a pillar built of many stones,

Yet neither with good mortar well compact,

Nor cement to fasten it in the joints,

But that it shakes with every blast of wind,

And being touched, straight falls unto the earth

And buries all his haughty pride in dust.

No, let our love be rocks of adamant

Which time nor place nor tempest can asunder.

GREENE Mosby, leave protestations now,

And let us bethink us what we have to do.

Black Will and Shakebag I have placed

In the broom close, watching Arden's coming.

Let's to them and see what they have done.

## Scene xi

*Here enters ARDEN and FRANKLIN*

ARDEN Oh ferryman, where art thou?

*Here enters the FERRYMAN*

FERRYMAN Here, here! Go before to the boat, and I  
will follow you.

ARDEN We have great haste; I pray thee come away.

FERRYMAN Fie, what a mist is here!

ARDEN This mist, my friend, is mystical,

Like to a good companion's smoky brain

That was half-drowned with new ale overnight.

FERRYMAN 'Twere pity but his skull were opened to  
make more chimney room.

FRANKLIN Friend, what's thy opinion of this mist?

FERRYMAN I think 'tis like to a curst wife in a little  
house, that never leaves her husband till she have  
driven him out at doors with a wet pair of eyes. Then

84 it: i.e. the poisoned crucifix (see i.609–16)

92 leave: cease

9 but: unless

12 curst: shrewish

14 at: of

looks he as if his house were afire, or some of his  
friends dead.

ARDEN Speaks thou this of thine own experience?

FERRYMAN Perhaps ay, perhaps no; for my wife is as  
other women are, that is to say, governed by the  
moon. 20

FRANKLIN By the moon? How, I pray thee?

FERRYMAN Nay, thereby lies a bargain, and you shall  
not have it fresh and fasting. 90

ARDEN Yes, I pray thee, good ferryman.

FERRYMAN Then for this once let it be midsummer  
moon; but yet my wife has another moon.

FRANKLIN Another moon?

FERRYMAN Ay, and it hath influences and eclipses.

ARDEN Why then, by this reckoning you sometimes  
play the man in the moon. 30

FERRYMAN Ay, but you had not best to meddle with  
that moon lest I scratch you by the face with my  
bramble-bush. 100

ARDEN I am almost stifled with this fog; come, let's  
away.

FRANKLIN And sirrah, as we go, let us have some more  
of your bold yeomanry.

FERRYMAN Nay, by my troth, sir, but flat knavery.

*Exeunt*

## Scene xii

*Exeunt Here enters BLACK WILL at one door and SHAKEBAG at another*

SHAKEBAG Oh Will, where art thou?

BLACK WILL Here, Shakebag, almost in hell's mouth,  
where I cannot see my way for smoke.

SHAKEBAG I pray thee speak still that we may meet by  
the sound, for I shall fall into some ditch or other  
unless my feet see better than my eyes.

BLACK WILL Didst thou ever see better weather to run  
away with another man's wife or play with a wench at  
potfinger? 9

SHAKEBAG No; this were a fine world for chandlers if  
this weather would last, for then a man should never  
dine nor sup without candle-light. But, sirrah Will,  
what horses are those that passed?

19–20 governed . . . moon: i.e. inconstant

23 fresh and fasting: 'having an appetite or inclination'  
(OED); the sense seems to be 'even though you have an  
inclination to know'

25 midsummer: sometimes alluded to as a time when lunacy  
is supposed to be prevalent

33 bramble-bush: the Man in the Moon was traditionally  
said to have a lantern, a dog and a thorn bush; see  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V.i.247–51

37 yeomanry: yeoman's talk: honest, homely speech

9 at potfinger: sexual allusion

BLACK WILL Why, didst thou hear any?

SHAKEBAG Ay, that I did.

BLACK WILL My life for thine, 'twas Arden and his companion, and then all our labour's lost.

SHAKEBAG Nay, say not so; for if it be they, they may haply lose their way as we have done, and then we may chance meet with them. 20

BLACK WILL Come, let us go on like a couple of blind pilgrims. *Then SHAKEBAG falls into a ditch*

SHAKEBAG Help, Will, help! I am almost drowned.

*Here enters the FERRYMAN*

FERRYMAN Who's that that calls for help?

BLACK WILL 'Twas none here; 'twas thou thyself.

FERRYMAN I came to help him that called for help.

Why, how now? Who is this that's in the ditch? You are well enough served to go without a guide such weather as this!

BLACK WILL Sirrah, what companies hath passed your ferry this morning? 31

FERRYMAN None but a couple of gentlemen that went to dine at my Lord Cheiny's.

BLACK WILL Shakebag, did not I tell thee as much?

FERRYMAN Why, sir, will you have any letters carried to them?

BLACK WILL No, sir; get you gone.

FERRYMAN Did you ever see such a mist as this?

BLACK WILL No, nor such a fool as will rather be hocked than get his way. 40

FERRYMAN Why, sir, this is no Hock Monday; you are deceived. What's his name, I pray you, sir?

SHAKEBAG His name is Black Will.

FERRYMAN I hope to see him one day hanged upon a hill. *Exit FERRYMAN*

SHAKEBAG See how the sun hath cleared the foggy mist,

Now we have missed the mark of our intent.

*Here enters GREENE, MOSBY, and ALICE*

MOSBY Black Will and Shakebag, what make you here? What, is the deed done? Is Arden dead?

BLACK WILL What could a blinded man perform in arms? 50

Saw you not how till now the sky was dark,  
That neither horse nor man could be discerned?

Yet did we hear their horses as they passed.

GREENE Have they escaped you then and passed the ferry?

28 to go: for going

30 companies: groups of people

40 hocked: hamstrung

get: i.e. get on

41 Hock Monday: second Monday after Easter, a popular festival

SHAKEBAG Ay, for a while; but here we two will stay,  
And at their coming back meet with them once more.

Zounds, I was ne'er so toiled in all my life

In following so slight a task as this.

MOSBY How cam'st thou so berayed?

BLACK WILL With making false footing in the dark; 60  
He needs would follow them without a guide.

ALICE Here's to pay for a fire and good cheer.

Get you to Faversham, to the Flower-de-Luce,  
And rest yourselves until some other time.

GREENE Let me alone; it most concerns my state.

BLACK WILL Ay, Mistress Arden, this will serve the turn

In case we fall into a second fog.

*Exeunt GREENE, BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG*

MOSBY These knaves will never do it; let us give it over.

ALICE First tell me how you like my new device: 70  
Soon, when my husband is returning back,

You and I both marching arm in arm,

Like loving friends, we'll meet him on the way,  
And boldly beard and brave him to his teeth.

When words grow hot and blows begin to rise,

I'll call those cutters forth your tenement,

Who, in a manner to take up the fray,

Shall wound my husband Hornsby to the death.

MOSBY Ah, fine device! Why, this deserves a kiss.

*Exeunt*

## Scene xiii

*Here enters DICK REEDE and a SAILOR*

SAILOR Faith, Dick Reede, it is to little end.

His conscience is too liberal and he too niggardly

To part from anything may do thee good.

REEDE He is coming from Shorlow as I understand.

Here I'll intercept him, for at his house

He never will vouchsafe to speak with me.

If prayers and fair entreaties will not serve

Or make no batt'ry in his flinty breast,

*Here enters FRANKLIN, ARDEN, and MICHAEL*

I'll curse the carl and see what that will do.

57 toiled: fatigued

59 berayed: covered with mud

65 Let me alone: 'either "Leave me alone to deal with them", or "Let me be the one to take care of things" (White); see xiv.325

69 device: scheme

73 beard: defy

75 tenement: dwelling place

77 Hornsby: i.e. the cuckold

2 liberal: unrestrained

9 carl: churlish fellow

See where he comes to further my intent.—  
 Master Arden, I am now bound to the sea.  
 My coming to you was about the plot of ground  
 Which wrongfully you detain from me.  
 Although the rent of it be very small,  
 Yet will it help my wife and children,  
 Which here I leave in Faversham, God knows,  
 Needy and bare. For Christ's sake, let them have it!

ARDEN Franklin, hearest thou this fellow speak?

That which he craves I dearly bought of him  
 Although the rent of it was ever mine.

Sirrah, you that ask these questions,  
 If with thy clamorous impeaching tongue  
 Thou rail on me as I have heard thou dost,  
 I'll lay thee up so close a twelve month's day  
 As thou shalt neither see the sun nor moon.  
 Look to it; for, as surely as I live,  
 I'll banish pity if thou use me thus.

REEDE What, wilt thou do me wrong and threat me  
 too?

Nay then, I'll tempt thee, Arden; do thy worst.  
 God, I beseech thee, show some miracle  
 On thee or thine in plaguing thee for this.  
 That plot of ground which thou detains from me—  
 I speak it in an agony of spirit—  
 Be ruinous and fatal unto thee!

Either there be butchered by thy dearest friends,  
 Or else be brought for men to wonder at,  
 Or thou or thine miscarry in that place,  
 Or there run mad and end thy cursed days.

FRANKLIN Fie, bitter knave, bridle thine envious  
 tongue;

For curses are like arrows shot upright,  
 Which, falling down, light on the shooter's head.

REEDE Light where they will! Were I upon the sea,  
 As oft I have in many a bitter storm,  
 And saw a dreadful southern flaw at hand,  
 The pilot quaking at the doubtful storm,  
 And all the sailors praying on their knees,  
 Even in that fearful time would I fall down  
 And ask of God, whate'er betide of me,  
 Vengeance on Arden, or some misevent,  
 To show the world what wrong the carl hath done. 50  
 This charge I'll leave with my distressful wife;  
 My children shall be taught such prayers as these.  
 And thus I go, but leave my curse with thee.

*Exeunt REEDE and SAILOR*

ARDEN It is the railingest knave in Christendom,

24 lay . . . so close: imprison you

29 tempt: provoke

37 miscarry: come to harm, die

39 envious: malicious

44 flaw: squall

45 doubtful: dreaded

49 misevent: mischance

10 And oftentimes the villain will be mad.  
 It greatly matters not what he says,  
 But I assure you I ne'er did him wrong.

FRANKLIN I think so, Master Arden.

ARDEN Now that our horses are gone home before,  
 My wife may haply meet me on the way; 60  
 For God knows she is grown passing kind of late  
 And greatly changed from the old humour  
 Of her wonted frowardness,  
 And seeks by fair means to redeem old faults.

20 FRANKLIN Happy the change that alters for the best.

But see in any case you make no speech  
 Of the cheer we had at my Lord Cheiny's,  
 Although most bounteous and liberal,  
 For that will make her think herself more wronged  
 In that we did not carry her along; 70  
 For sure she grieved that she was left behind.

ARDEN Come, Franklin, let us strain to mend our pace  
 And take her unawares, playing the cook,

*Here enters ALICE and MOSBY arm in arm*

30 For I believe she'll strive to mend our cheer.

FRANKLIN Why, there's no better creatures in the  
 world

Than women are when they are in good humours.

ARDEN Who is that? Mosby? What, so familiar?

Injurious strumpet and thou ribald knave,  
 Untwine those arms.

ALICE Ay, with a sugared kiss let them untwine. 80

ARDEN Ah, Mosby! Perjured beast! Bear this and all!

MOSBY And yet no horned beast; the horns are thine.

FRANKLIN Oh monstrous! Nay then, 'tis time to draw!

40 ALICE Help! Help! They murder my husband!

*Here enters BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG*

SHAKEBAG Zounds, who injures Master Mosby?

*They fight. SHAKEBAG and MOSBY are wounded*

Help, Will, I am hurt.

MOSBY I may thank you, Mistress Arden, for this  
 wound.

*Exeunt MOSBY, BLACK WILL, and SHAKEBAG*

ALICE Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee?

Ah, jealous harebrain man what hast thou done?

When we, to welcome thee, intended sport, 90

Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way,

Thou drew'st thy sword, enraged with jealousy,  
 And hurt thy friend whose thoughts were free from  
 harm;

All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,

62 humour: disposition

63 frowardness: ill humour

67 cheer: hospitality

72 mend: increase

82 horned beast: i.e. cuckold

Both done but merrily to try thy patience.  
 And me unhappy that devised the jest,  
 Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood!  
 FRANKLIN Marry, God defend me from such a jest!  
 ALICE Couldst thou not see us friendly smile on thee  
 When we joined arms and when I kissed his cheek?  
 Hast thou not lately found me over-kind? **101**  
 Didst thou not hear me cry they murder thee?  
 Called I not help to set my husband free?  
 No, ears and all were 'witched. Ah me accursed,  
 To link in liking with a frantic man!  
 Henceforth I'll be thy slave, no more thy wife;  
 For with that name I never shall content thee.  
 If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light;  
 If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me;  
 If well attired, thou thinks I will be gadding; **110**  
 If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye.  
 Thus am I still, and shall be while I die,  
 Poor wench abused by thy misgovernment.  
 ARDEN But is it for truth that neither thou nor he  
 Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour?  
 ALICE The heavens can witness of our harmless  
 thoughts.  
 ARDEN Then pardon me, sweet Alice, and forgive this  
 fault.  
 Forget but this, and never see the like.  
 Impose me penance, and I will perform it;  
 For in thy discontent I find a death, **120**  
 A death tormenting more than death itself.  
 ALICE Nay, hadst thou loved me as thou dost pretend,  
 Thou wouldst have marked the speeches of thy  
 friend,  
 Who going wounded from the place, he said  
 His skin was pierced only through my device.  
 And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault  
 Thou wouldst have followed him and seen him  
 dressed,  
 And cried him mercy whom thou hast misdone;  
 Ne'er shall my heart be eased till this be done.  
 ARDEN Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy  
 will, **130**  
 Whate'er it be. For that I injured thee  
 And wronged my friend, shame scourgeth my  
 offence.  
 Come thou thyself and go along with me,  
 And be a mediator 'twixt us two.  
 FRANKLIN Why, Master Arden, know you what you  
 do?

109 sullens: sulks  
 112 still: always  
 while: until  
 127 him: i.e. his wounds  
 128 misdone: wronged  
 131 For that: because

Will you follow him that hath dishonoured you?  
 ALICE Why, canst thou prove I have been disloyal?  
 FRANKLIN Why, Mosby taunts your husband with the  
 horn.  
 ALICE Ay, after he had reviled him  
 By the injurious name of perjured beast. **140**  
 He knew no wrong could spite a jealous man  
 More than the hateful naming of the horn.  
 FRANKLIN Suppose 'tis true, yet is it dangerous  
 To follow him whom he hath lately hurt.  
 ALICE A fault confessed is more than half amends,  
 But men of such ill spirit as yourself  
 Work crosses and debates 'twixt man and wife.  
 ARDEN I pray thee, gentle Franklin, hold thy peace;  
 I know my wife counsels me for the best.  
 I'll seek out Mosby where his wound is dressed **150**  
 And salve his hapless quarrel if I may.

*Exeunt ARDEN and ALICE*

FRANKLIN He whom the devil drives must go perforce.  
 Poor gentleman, how soon he is bewitched.  
 And yet, because his wife is the instrument,  
 His friends must not be lavish in their speech.

*Exit FRANKLIN*

## Scene xiv

*Here enters BLACK WILL, SHAKEBAG, and GREENE*

BLACK WILL Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in  
 killing a man?  
 GREENE I think we shall never do it; let us give it over.  
 SHAKEBAG Nay! Zounds, we'll kill him though we be  
 hanged at his door for our labour.  
 BLACK WILL Thou knowest, Greene, that I have lived  
 in London this twelve years, where I have made some  
 go upon wooden legs for taking the wall on me;  
 divers with silver noses for saying, 'There goes Black  
 Will.' I have cracked as many blades as thou hast  
 done nuts. **11**  
 GREENE Oh, monstrous lie!  
 BLACK WILL Faith, in a manner I have. The bawdy-  
 houses have paid me tribute; there durst not a whore  
 set up unless she have agreed with me first for  
 opening her shop windows. For a cross word of a  
 tapster I have pierced one barrel after another with  
 my dagger and held him by the ears till all his beer  
 hath run out. In Thames Street a brewer's cart was  
 like to have run over me; I made no more ado but

147 crosses and debates: troubles and quarrels  
 151 hapless: unfortunate  
 8 taking the wall: i.e. walking next to the wall (the cleaner  
 and safer position), thereby forcing Black Will into the  
 street  
 9 silver noses: i.e. false noses

went to the clerk and cut all the notches off his tallies and beat them about his head. I and my company have taken the constable from his watch and carried him about the fields on a coltstaff. I have broken a sergeant's head with his own mace, and bailed whom I list with my sword and buckler. All the tenpenny alehouses would stand every morning with a quart pot in their hand, saying, 'Will it please your worship drink?' He that had not done so had been sure to have had his sign pulled down and his lattice borne away the next night. To conclude, what have I not done? Yet cannot do this; doubtless he is preserved by miracle. 33

*Here enters ALICE and MICHAEL*

GREENE Hence, Will; here comes Mistress Arden.

ALICE Ah, gentle Michael, art thou sure they're friends?

MICHAEL Why, I saw them when they both shook hands;

When Mosby bled he even wept for sorrow,  
And railed on Franklin that was cause of all.  
No sooner came the surgeon in at doors,  
But my master took to his purse and gave him money,  
And, to conclude, sent me to bring you word 41  
That Mosby, Franklin, Bradshaw, Adam Fowle,  
With divers of his neighbours and his friends,  
Will come and sup with you at our house this night.

ALICE Ah, gentle Michael, run thou back again,  
And when my husband walks into the fair,  
Bid Mosby steal from him and come to me;  
And this night shall thou and Susan be made sure.

MICHAEL I'll go tell him.

ALICE And as thou goest, tell John cook of our guests,  
And bid him lay it on; spare for no cost. 51

*Exit MICHAEL*

BLACK WILL Nay, and there be such cheer, we will bid ourselves. Mistress Arden, Dick Greene and I do mean to sup with you.

21 tallies: sticks on which notches were made to record accounts

24 coltstaff: pole used for carrying a tub or 'cowl'

25 sergeant: responsible for arresting offenders and summoning them to court  
mace: staff of office

26 list: wished

26-7 tenpenny alehouses: i.e. keepers of alehouses selling ale at tenpence a quart

30 lattice: red- or green-painted lattices were alehouse signs

46 the fair: St Valentine's fair, held annually in Faversham. This fair figures significantly in Holinshed's account of Arden's murder

50 John cook: i.e. John the cook

51 lay it on: spare no expense

52 and: if

bid: invite

ALICE And welcome shall you be. Ah, gentlemen,

How missed you of your purpose yesternight?

GREENE 'Twas long of Shakebag, that unlucky villain. 57

SHAKEBAG Thou dost me wrong; I did as much as any.

BLACK WILL Nay then, Mistress Alice, I'll tell you how it was. When he should have locked with both his hilts, he in a bravery flourished over his head. With that comes Franklin at him lustily and hurts the slave; with that he slinks away. Now his way had been to have come in hand and feet, one and two round at his costard. He like a fool bears his sword-point half a yard out of danger. I lie here for my life. (*He takes up a position of defence*) If the devil come and he have no more strength than fence, he shall never beat me from this ward; I'll stand to it. A buckler in a skilful hand is as good as a castle; nay, 'tis better than a sconce, for I have tried it. Mosby, perceiving this, began to faint. With that comes Arden with his arming-sword and thrust him through the shoulder in a trice. 74

ALICE Ay, but I wonder why you both stood still.

BLACK WILL Faith, I was so amazed I could not strike.

ALICE Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,  
For every drop of his detested blood  
I would have crammed in angels in thy fist,  
And kissed thee, too, and hugged thee in my arms. 80

BLACK WILL Patient yourself; we cannot help it now.

Greene and we two will dog him through the fair,  
And stab him in the crowd, and steal away.

*Here enters MOSBY, his arm bandaged*

ALICE It is impossible. But here comes he

That will, I hope, invent some surer means.

Sweet Mosby, hide thy arm; it kills my heart.

MOSBY Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favour.

56 missed you: did you fail

57 long of: because of

60 locked: attacked

61 hilts: swords

in a bravery: with bravado

64 in: eds (not in Qs)

65 round: directly

costard: head

68 fence: fencing skill

69 ward: defensive posture

I'll stand to it: i.e. 'I'll fight fiercely'. However, Qs' punctuation here is ambiguous, so that the phrase might instead be read as beginning the next sentence, meaning 'I'll maintain that . . .'

71 sconce: a small fort

this: i.e. Shakebag's injury

72 faint: lose heart

73 arming-sword: sword with which he was armed

79 angels: coins

81 Patient yourself: be patient

87 favour: gift or token from a lover

- ALICE Ah, say not so; for when I saw thee hurt  
I could have took the weapon thou let'st fall  
And run at Arden, for I have sworn  
That these mine eyes, offended with his sight,  
Shall never close till Arden's be shut up.  
This night I rose and walked about the chamber,  
And twice or thrice I thought to have murdered him.
- MOSBY What, in the night? Then had we been undone!
- ALICE Why, how long shall he live?
- MOSBY Faith, Alice, no longer than this night.  
Black Will and Shakebag, will you two  
Perform the complot that I have laid?
- BLACK WILL Ay, or else think me as a villain.
- GREENE And rather than you shall want, I'll help myself.
- MOSBY You, Master Greene, shall single Franklin forth  
And hold him with a long tale of strange news,  
That he may not come home till supertime.  
I'll fetch Master Arden home, and we, like friends,  
Will play a game or two at tables here.
- ALICE But what of all this? How shall he be slain?
- MOSBY Why, Black Will and Shakebag, locked within  
the countinghouse,  
Shall, at a certain watchword given, rush forth.
- BLACK WILL What shall the watchword be?
- MOSBY 'Now I take you'—that shall be the word.  
But come not forth before in any case.
- BLACK WILL I warrant you; but who shall lock me in?
- ALICE That will I do; thou'st keep the key thyself.
- MOSBY Come, Master Greene go you along with me.  
See all things ready, Alice, against we come.
- ALICE Take no care for that; send you him home.
- Exeunt MOSBY and GREENE*
- And if he e'er go forth again blame me.  
Come, Black Will, that in mine eyes art fair;  
Next unto Mosby do I honour thee.  
Instead of fair words and large promises  
My hands shall play you golden harmony.  
How like you this? Say, will you do it, sirs?
- BLACK WILL Ay, and that bravely, too. Mark my device:  
Place Mosby, being a stranger, in a chair,  
And let your husband sit upon a stool,  
That I may come behind him cunningly  
And with a towel pull him to the ground,
- Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve.  
That done, bear him behind the Abbey,  
That those that find him murdered may suppose  
Some slave or other killed him for his gold.
- ALICE A fine device! You shall have twenty pound,  
And when he is dead you shall have forty more.  
And lest you might be suspected staying here,  
Michael shall saddle you two lusty geldings.  
Ride whither you will, to Scotland or to Wales;  
I'll see you shall not lack where'er you be.
- BLACK WILL Such words would make one kill a  
thousand men!  
Give me the key; which is the countinghouse?
- ALICE Here would I stay and still encourage you,  
But that I know how resolute you are.
- SHAKEBAG Tush! You are too faint-hearted; we must  
do it.
- ALICE But Mosby will be there, whose very looks  
Will add unwonted courage to my thought,  
And make me the first that shall adventure on him.
- BLACK WILL Tush, get you gone; 'tis we must do the  
deed.  
When this door opens next, look for his death.
- Exeunt BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG*
- ALICE Ah, would he now were here, that it might  
open.  
I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms,  
That like the snakes of black Tisiphone  
Sting me with their embracings. Mosby's arms  
Shall compass me, and, were I made a star,  
I would have none other spheres but those.  
There is no nectar but in Mosby's lips!  
Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me  
Would grow love-sick, and from her war'ry bower  
Fling down Endymion and snatch him up.  
Then blame not me that slay a silly man  
Not half so lovely as Endymion.
- Here enters MICHAEL*
- MICHAEL Mistress, my master is coming hard by.  
ALICE Who comes with him?  
MICHAEL Nobody but Mosby.  
ALICE That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables; and,  
when thou hast done, stand before the countinghouse  
door.  
MICHAEL Why so?  
ALICE Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

93 This night: i.e. last night

101 want: fail

106 tables: backgammon

108 countinghouse: private room used as an office

116 against: by the time that

117 Take . . . that: don't worry about that

122 play . . . harmony: i.e. give you money

124 bravely: splendidly

125–6 chair . . . stool: chairs were still relatively scarce,  
outnumbered by stools and forms

129 sieve Q<sub>2</sub>, Q<sub>3</sub> (sine Q<sub>1</sub>). Sturges suggests that 'seine' (a  
fishing net) is 'marginally possible'

146 adventure: venture

151 Tisiphone: one of the Furies, avengers of crimes,  
especially crimes against kin; represented with snakes  
encircling her arms and in her hair

156–60 Diana . . . Endymion: the moon goddess Diana fell in  
love with Endymion, a beautiful mortal

ANON.

MICHAEL What, shall he die tonight?

ALICE Ay, Michael.

MICHAEL But shall not Susan know it?

ALICE Yes, for she'll be as secret as ourselves.

MICHAEL That's brave! I'll go fetch the tables.

ALICE But Michael, hark to me a word or two:

When my husband is come in, lock the street door;  
He shall be murdered ere the guests come in.

*Exit MICHAEL and re-enters shortly with the tables*

*Here enters ARDEN and MOSBY*

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosby home?

Although I wished you to be reconciled,  
'Twas more for fear of you than love of him.

Black Will and Greene are his companions,  
And they are cutters and may cut you short;  
Therefore, I thought it good to make you friends.

But wherefore do you bring him hither now?  
You have given me my supper with his sight.

MOSBY Master Arden, methinks your wife would have  
me gone.

ARDEN No, good Master Mosby, women will be  
prating.

Alice, bid him welcome; he and I are friends.

ALICE You may enforce me to it if you will,  
But I had rather die than bid him welcome.

His company hath purchased me ill friends,  
And therefore will I ne'er frequent it more.

MOSBY (*Aside*) Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble!

ARDEN Now he is here, you will not serve me so.

ALICE I pray you be not angry or displeas'd;  
I'll bid him welcome, seeing you'll have it so.

You are welcome, Master Mosby. Will you sit down?

MOSBY I know I am welcome to your loving husband,

But for yourself you speak not from your heart.

ALICE And if I do not, sir, think I have cause.

MOSBY Pardon me, Master Arden, I'll away.

ARDEN No, good Master Mosby.

ALICE We shall have guests enough though you go  
hence.

MOSBY I pray you, Master Arden, let me go.

ARDEN I pray thee, Mosby, let her prate her fill.

ALICE The doors are open, sir; you may be gone.

MICHAEL (*Aside*) Nay, that's a lie, for I have locked the  
doors.

ARDEN Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine; I'll make them  
friends. *Exit MICHAEL, and re-enters with wine*

And, gentle Mistress Alice, seeing you are so stout,  
You shall begin. Frown not; I'll have it so.

ALICE I pray you meddle with that you have to do.

ARDEN Why, Alice, how can I do too much for him  
Whose life I have endangered without cause?

ALICE 'Tis true; and seeing 'twas partly through my  
means,

I am content to drink to him for this once.

Here, Master Mosby! And, I pray you, henceforth  
Be you as strange to me as I to you.

Your company hath purchased me ill friends,  
And I for you, God knows, have undeserved  
Been ill spoken of in every place;

Therefore, henceforth frequent my house no more.

MOSBY I'll see your husband in despite of you.

Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by heaven,

Thou ne'er shalt see me more after this night.

I'll go to Rome rather than be forsworn.

ARDEN Tush, I'll have no such vows made in my house.

ALICE Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear;

And on that condition, Mosby, pledge me here.

MOSBY Ay, as willingly as I mean to live.

ARDEN Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet?

ALICE It will by then you have played a game at tables.

ARDEN Come, Master Mosby, what shall we play for?

MOSBY Three games for a French crown, sir, and please  
you.

ARDEN Content. *Then they play at the tables*

*Enter BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG*

BLACK WILL (*Aside*) Can he not take him yet? What a  
spite is that!

ALICE (*Aside*) Not yet, Will. Take heed he see thee not.

BLACK WILL (*Aside*) I fear he will spy me as I am  
coming.

MICHAEL (*Aside*) To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.

MOSBY One ace, or else I lose the game.

*He throws the dice*

ARDEN Marry, sir, there's two for failing.

MOSBY Ah, Master Arden, 'Now I can take you.'

*Then BLACK WILL pulls him down with a towel*

ARDEN Mosby! Michael! Alice! What will you do?

BLACK WILL Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing  
else.

173 brave: splendid

179 of you: for you

180 Greene: Sturgess notes that we might expect Shakebag, not Greene, to be mentioned here, since Greene (unlike Shakebag) is not a 'cutter', and was not involved in the fight in scene xiii. 'Greene', he suggests, better suits the rhythm of the line, but White suggests 'it might well be a dangerous slip on Alice's part that momentarily chills the hearts of her accomplices'

184 given me my supper: i.e. taken away my appetite

208 stout: stubborn

209 begin: i.e. offer the first toast

227 pledge: drink to

232 French crown: see iii.75n  
and: if it

238 ace: i.e. on the dice

239 for failing: i.e. in case one is not enough

242 take you up: deal with you (playing on the watchword)

MOSBY There's for the pressing iron you told me of.  
*He stabs him*

SHAKEBAG And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve.  
*Stabs him*

ALICE What, groans thou? Nay then, give me the  
 weapon.  
 Take this for hind'ring Mosby's love and mine.  
*Stabs him*

MICHAEL Oh, Mistress!  
 ARDEN *dies*

BLACK WILL Ah, that villain will betray us all.  
 MOSBY Tush, fear him not; he will be secret. 249

MICHAEL Why, dost thou think I will betray myself?  
 SHAKEBAG In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,

The widow Chambley; I'll to her house now,  
 And if she will not give me harborough,

I'll make booty of the quean, even to her smock.  
 BLACK WILL Shift for yourselves; we two will leave you  
 now.

ALICE First lay the body in the countinghouse.  
*Then they lay the body in the countinghouse*

BLACK WILL We have our gold. Mistress Alice, adieu;  
 Mosby, farewell, and Michael, farewell too.

*Exeunt* BLACK WILL and SHAKEBAG

*Enter* SUSAN

SUSAN Mistress, the guests are at the doors.  
 Harken, they knock. What, shall I let them in? 260

ALICE Mosby, go thou and bear them company.  
*Exit* MOSBY

And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.  
*Exit* SUSAN, *returns with water, and washes the floor*

SUSAN The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not  
 out.

ALICE But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood.—  
 The more I strive the more the blood appears.

SUSAN What's the reason, Mistress, can you tell?  
 ALICE Because I blush not at my husband's death.

*Here enters* MOSBY

MOSBY How now, what's the matter? Is all well?  
 ALICE Ay, well, if Arden were alive again!

In vain we strive, for here his blood remains. 270

243 pressing iron: see i.313

SD The sources suggest that Mosby attacked Arden with his pressing iron. White is the only ed to include this in his stage direction; all other eds have concluded that, in the play, he stabs him. There is no stage direction in Qs

251 Southwark: London borough south of the Thames, known for its crime and brothels as well as its playhouses

253 harborough: harbour, shelter

254 make . . . quean: take the harlot by force

263–5 The blood cleaveth . . . appears: compare *Macbeth* II.ii.58–9: 'Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood/Clean from my hand?'

MOSBY Why, strew rushes on it, can you not?  
 This wench doth nothing; fall unto the work.

ALICE 'Twas thou that made me murder him.  
 MOSBY What of that?

ALICE Nay, nothing, Mosby, so it be not known.  
 MOSBY Keep thou it close, and 'tis impossible.

ALICE Ah, but I cannot. Was he not slain by me?  
 My husband's death torments me at the heart.

MOSBY It shall not long torment thee, gentle Alice.  
 I am thy husband; think no more of him.

*Here enters* ADAM FOWLE and BRADSHAW

BRADSHAW How now, Mistress Arden, what ail you  
 weep? 280

MOSBY Because her husband is abroad so late.  
 A couple of ruffians threat'ned him yesternight,

And she, poor soul, is afraid he should be hurt.  
 ADAM Is't nothing else? Tush, he'll be here anon.

*Here enters* GREENE

GREENE Now, Mistress Arden, lack you any guests?  
 ALICE Ah, Master Greene, did you see my husband  
 lately?

GREENE I saw him walking behind the Abbey even now.  
*Here enters* FRANKLIN

ALICE I do not like this being out so late.  
 Master Franklin, where did you leave my husband?

FRANKLIN Believe me, I saw him not since morning.  
 Fear you not, he'll come anon. Meantime, 291

You may do well to bid his guests sit down.  
 ALICE Ay, so they shall. Master Bradshaw, sit you  
 there;

I pray you be content, I'll have my will.  
 Master Mosby, sit you in my husband's seat.

MICHAEL (*Aside*) Susan, shall thou and I wait on them?  
 Or, and thou say'st the word, let us sit down too.

SUSAN (*Aside*) Peace, we have other matters now in  
 hand.

I fear me, Michael, all will be bewrayed. 299

MICHAEL (*Aside*) Tush, so it be known that I shall  
 marry thee in the morning I care not though I be  
 hanged ere night. But to prevent the worst I'll buy  
 some ratsbane.

SUSAN (*Aside*) Why, Michael, wilt thou poison thyself?  
 MICHAEL (*Aside*) No, but my mistress, for I fear she'll  
 tell.

SUSAN (*Aside*) Tush, Michael, fear not her; she's wise  
 enough.

271 rushes: a common floor covering

275 close: secret

280 what . . . weep?: i.e. what ails you that you weep?

299 bewrayed: betrayed, revealed

303 ratsbane: rat poison



ANON.

MOSBY Sirrah Michael, give's a cup of beer.

Mistress Arden, here's to your husband.

ALICE My husband! 309

FRANKLIN What ails you, woman, to cry so suddenly?

ALICE Ah, neighbours, a sudden qualm came over my heart;

My husband's being forth torments my mind.

I know something's amiss; he is not well,

Or else I should have heard of him ere now.

MOSBY (*Aside*) She will undo us through her foolishness.

GREENE Fear not, Mistress Arden, he's well enough.

ALICE Tell not me; I know he is not well.

He was not wont for to stay thus late.

Good Master Franklin, go and seek him forth,

And if you find him send him home to me, 320

And tell him what a fear he hath put me in.

FRANKLIN (*Aside*) I like not this; I pray God all be well.—  
I'll seek him out and find him if I can.

*Exeunt FRANKLIN, MOSBY, and GREENE*

ALICE (*Aside*) Michael, how shall I do to rid the rest away?

MICHAEL (*Aside*) Leave that to my charge; let me alone.—

'Tis very late, Master Bradshaw,

And there are many false knaves abroad,

And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

BRADSHAW Faith, friend Michael, and thou sayest true.

Therefore I pray thee light's forth and lend's a link.

*Exeunt BRADSHAW, ADAM FOWLE, and MICHAEL*

ALICE Michael, bring them to the doors, but do not stay; 331

You know I do not love to be alone.

Go, Susan, and bid thy brother come.

But wherefore should he come? Here is nought but fear.

Stay, Susan, stay, and help to counsel me.

SUSAN Alas, I counsel! Fear frights away my wits.

*Then they open the countinghouse door and look upon* ARDEN

ALICE See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies;

Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore.

SUSAN My brother, you, and I shall rue this deed.

ALICE Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,  
And let our salt tears be his obsequies. 341

*They bring his body out of the countinghouse*

*Here enters MOSBY and GREENE*

MOSBY How now, Alice, whither will you bear him?

ALICE Sweet Mosby, art thou come? Then weep that will;

I have my wish in that I joy thy sight.

325 let me alone: see xii.65n

330 link: torch

337 quondam: former

GREENE Well, it 'hoves us to be circumspect.

MOSBY Ay, for Franklin thinks that we have murdered him.

ALICE Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life.

We'll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

*Here enters MICHAEL*

MICHAEL Oh mistress, the mayor and all the watch 349

Are coming towards our house with glaives and bills.

ALICE Make the door fast; let them not come in.

MOSBY Tell me, sweet Alice, how shall I escape?

ALICE Out at the back door, over the pile of wood

And for one night lie at the Flower-de-Luce.

MOSBY That is the next way to betray myself.

GREENE Alas, Mistress Arden, the watch will take me here,

And cause suspicion where else would be none.

ALICE Why, take that way that Master Mosby doth;

But first convey the body to the fields.

*Then MOSBY, GREENE, MICHAEL and SUSAN bear the body into the fields and then return*

MOSBY Until tomorrow, sweet Alice; now farewell, 360

And see you confess nothing in any case.

GREENE Be resolute, Mistress Alice; betray us not,

But cleave to us as we will stick to you.

*Exeunt MOSBY and GREENE*

ALICE Now let the judge and juries do their worst;

My house is clear and now I fear them not.

SUSAN As we went it snowed all the way,

Which makes me fear our footsteps will be spied.

ALICE Peace, fool! The snow will cover them again.

SUSAN But it had done before we came back again. 369

ALICE Hark, hark, they knock! Go, Michael, let them in.  
*MICHAEL opens the door*

*Here enters the MAYOR and the WATCH*

How now, Master Mayor, have you brought my husband home?

MAYOR I saw him come into your house an hour ago.

ALICE You are deceived; it was a Londoner.

MAYOR Mistress Arden, know you not one that is called Black Will?

ALICE I know none such. What mean these questions?

MAYOR I have the Council's warrant to apprehend him.

ALICE (*Aside*) I am glad it is no worse.—

Why, Master Mayor, think you I harbour any such?

MAYOR We are informed that here he is,

345 'hoves: behoves

349 watch: street patrol which acted as police

350 glaives and bills: swords and halberds

355 next: quickest

369 done: i.e. stopped snowing

373 a Londoner: i.e. a stranger to the mayor. Holinshed reports that, after the murder, Alice sent for two Londoners to come to supper

And therefore pardon us, for we must search. 380  
 ALICE Ay, search, and spare you not, through every room.  
 Were my husband at home you would not offer this.

*Here enters FRANKLIN*

Master Franklin, what mean you come so sad?  
 FRANKLIN Arden, thy husband and my friend, is slain.  
 ALICE Ah, by whom? Master Franklin, can you tell?  
 FRANKLIN I know not; but behind the Abbey  
 There he lies murdered in most piteous case.  
 MAYOR But Master Franklin, are you sure 'tis he?  
 FRANKLIN I am too sure; would God I were deceived.  
 ALICE Find out the murderers; let them be known. 390  
 FRANKLIN Ay, so they shall. Come you along with us.  
 ALICE Wherefore?  
 FRANKLIN Know you this hand-towel and this  
 knife?

SUSAN (*Aside*) Ah, Michael, through this thy  
 negligence

Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.  
 MICHAEL (*Aside*) I was so afraid I knew not what I did.  
 I thought I had thrown them both into the well.  
 ALICE It is the pig's blood we had to supper.

But wherefore stay you? Find out the murderers.  
 MAYOR I fear me you'll prove one of them yourself.  
 ALICE I one of them? What mean such questions? 400  
 FRANKLIN I fear me he was murdered in this house  
 And carried to the fields, for from that place  
 Backwards and forwards may you see  
 The print of many feet within the snow.  
 And look about this chamber where we are,  
 And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;  
 For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,  
 Which argueth he was murdered in this room.

MAYOR Look in the place where he was wont to sit.  
 See, see! His blood! It is too manifest. 410  
 ALICE It is a cup of wine that Michael shed.

MICHAEL Ay, truly.  
 FRANKLIN It is his blood which, strumpet, thou hast  
 shed.  
 But if I live, thou and thy complices  
 Which have conspired and wrought his death shall  
 rue it.

ALICE Ah, Master Franklin, God and heaven can tell  
 I loved him more than all the world beside.  
 But bring me to him; let me see his body.

FRANKLIN Bring that villain and Mosby's sister too;  
 And one of you go to the Flower-de-Luce 420  
 And seek for Mosby, and apprehend him too.

*Exeunt*

387 piteous case: pitiful state  
 397 to: for  
 407 slipshoe: slipper  
 419 that villain: i.e. Michael

## Scene xv

*Here enters SHAKEBAG solus*

SHAKEBAG The widow Chambley in her husband's days  
 I kept;  
 And now he's dead she is grown so stout  
 She will not know her old companions.  
 I came thither, thinking to have had  
 Harbour as I was wont,  
 And she was ready to thrust me out at doors.  
 But whether she would or no I got me up,  
 And as she followed me I spurned her down the  
 stairs  
 And broke her neck, and cut her tapster's throat;  
 And now I am going to fling them in the Thames. 10  
 I have the gold; what care I though it be known?  
 I'll cross the water and take sanctuary.

*Exit SHAKEBAG*

## Scene xvi

*Here enters the MAYOR, MOSBY, ALICE, FRANKLIN,  
 MICHAEL, and SUSAN guarded by the WATCH*

MAYOR See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies.  
 Confess this foul fault and be penitent.  
 ALICE Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say?  
 The more I sound his name the more he bleeds.  
 This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth  
 Speaks as it falls and asks me why I did it.  
 Forgive me, Arden; I repent me now;  
 And would my death save thine thou shouldst not  
 die.  
 Rise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy love,  
 And frown not on me when we meet in heaven; 10  
 In heaven I love thee though on earth I did not.  
 MAYOR Say, Mosby, what made thee murder him?  
 FRANKLIN Study not for an answer, look not down.  
 His purse and girdle found at thy bed's head  
 Witness sufficiently thou didst the deed.  
 It bootless is to swear thou didst it not.

SD *solus*: alone

1 kept: i.e. as a mistress

2 stout: proud

8 spurned: kicked

12 take sanctuary: take refuge, in one of the areas of a church  
 or royal palace where criminals were safe from arrest

4-6 The more . . . did it: 'It was popularly believed that the  
 corpse of a murdered man bled in the presence of his  
 killer' (White); see *Richard III* I.ii.55-61, where the corpse  
 of the murdered Henry VI bleeds anew in the presence of  
 his killer, Richard, Duke of York

13 Study not: do not try to invent

14 girdle: belt (to carry purse)

16 bootless: pointless

ANON.

MOSBY I hired Black Will and Shakebag, ruffians both,  
And they and I have done this murd'rous deed.  
But wherefore stay we? Come and bear me hence.

FRANKLIN Those ruffians shall not escape. I will up to  
London 20  
And get the Council's warrant to apprehend them.

*Exeunt*

## Scene xvii

*Here enters BLACK WILL*

BLACK WILL Shakebag, I hear, hath taken sanctuary;  
But I am so pursued with hues and cries  
For petty robberies that I have done  
That I can come unto no sanctuary.  
Therefore must I in some oyster-boat  
At last be fain to go aboard some hoy,  
And so to Flushing. There is no staying here.  
At Sittingburgh the watch was like to take me,  
And, had I not with my buckler covered my head  
And run full blank at all adventures, 10  
I am sure I had ne'er gone further than that place,  
For the constable had twenty warrants to apprehend  
me;  
Besides that, I robbed him and his man once at  
Gadshill.  
Farewell, England; I'll to Flushing now.

*Exit BLACK WILL*

## Scene xviii

*Here enters the MAYOR, MOSBY, ALICE, MICHAEL, SUSAN,  
and BRADSHAW and the WATCH*

MAYOR Come, make haste, and bring away the  
prisoners.

BRADSHAW Mistress Arden, you are now going to God,  
And I am by the law condemned to die  
About a letter I brought from Master Greene.  
I pray you, Mistress Arden, speak the truth:  
Was I ever privy to your intent or no?

---

17 I hired . . . Shakebag: actually hired by Greene; but, as  
eds agree, this confession testifies to Mosby's awareness  
that the game is up and to his desire to have the affair  
concluded quickly

6 hoy: small boat

8 like: likely

10 full . . . adventures: 'headlong whatever the outcome'  
(White)

13 Gadshill: a hill on the road between London and  
Rochester, famous for its robberies. In *1 Henry IV*, the  
place where Prince Harry and Poinc pretend to rob  
Falstaff (II.iv)

4 About: on account of

6 privy to: aware of

ALICE What should I say? You brought me such a  
letter,

But I dare swear thou knewest not the contents.

Leave now to trouble me with worldly things,

And let me meditate upon my Saviour Christ, 10

Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed.

MOSBY How long shall I live in this hell of grief?

Convey me from the presence of that strumpet.

ALICE Ah, but for thee I had never been strumpet.

What cannot oaths and protestations do

When men have opportunity to woo?

I was too young to sound thy villainies,

But now I find it, and repent too late.

SUSAN Ah, gentle brother, wherefore should I die?

I knew not of it till the deed was done. 20

MOSBY For thee I mourn more than for myself,

But let it suffice I cannot save thee now.

MICHAEL And if your brother and my mistress

Had not promised me you in marriage,

I had ne'er given consent to this foul deed.

MAYOR Leave to accuse each other now,

And listen to the sentence I shall give:

Bear Mosby and his sister to London straight,

Where they in Smithfield must be executed;

Bear Mistress Arden unto Canterbury, 30

Where her sentence is she must be burnt;

Michael and Bradshaw in Faversham must suffer

death.

ALICE Let my death make amends for all my sins.

MOSBY Fie upon women!—this shall be my song.

But bear me hence, for I have lived too long.

SUSAN Seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my hope.

MICHAEL Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

BRADSHAW My blood be on his head that gave the

sentence!

MAYOR To speedy execution with them all!

*Exeunt*

## Epilogue

*Here enters FRANKLIN*

FRANKLIN Thus have you seen the truth of Arden's  
death.

As for the ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will,

The one took sanctuary, and being sent for out,

Was murdered in Southwark as he passed

To Greenwich where the Lord Protector lay.

Black Will was burnt in Flushing on a stage;

---

9 Leave: cease

17 sound: sound out

29 Smithfield: an open space east of the Tower of London,  
often used for executions

6 stage: scaffold

Greene was hanged at Osbridge in Kent;  
 The painter fled, and how he died we know not.  
 But this above the rest is to be noted:  
 Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground      10  
 Which he by force and violence held from Reede;  
 And in the grass his body's print was seen  
 Two years and more after the deed was done.

Gentlemen, we hope you'll pardon this naked  
     tragedy,  
 Wherein no filed points are foisted in  
 To make it gracious to the ear or eye;  
 For simple truth is gracious enough,  
 And needs no other points of glozing stuff.      *Exit*

---

7 Osbridge: i.e. Ospringe, in Kent

---

14 naked: plain  
 15 filed points: rhetorical figures. 'Points' were also the laces  
 attaching hose to doublet, 'hence the probable play on  
 the idea that the author was not adding adornments to  
 his simple style' (Wine)  
 18 glozing: specious

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## Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*

First performed 1592

First published 1594

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*Edward II* offers compelling evidence of the way that the Elizabethan theatres provided a forum for the representation and analysis of political and social circumstances that had an immediate resonance for their audiences. It may at first seem strange that a history play should perform this function, dealing, as *Edward II* does, with the events of two and a half centuries before; yet Tudor 'history' was conspicuously concerned (as perhaps the discipline of history always is) with the fashioning and interpretation of events, rather than the provision of a mere record, or still less, an objective account. Tudor intellectuals were obsessively interested in stories of the past and employed a variety of cultural forms in order to shape them, ranging from the chronicles of Ralph Holinshed (d. 1580) and John Stowe (c. 1525–1605), to the extended homage to the genealogy of Elizabeth I that is *The Faerie Queene* (1590–96), the epic poem by Edmund Spenser (1552–99). By the time *Edward II* was first staged, Shakespeare had completed the three parts of *Henry VI*, and his *Richard III*, celebrating the Tudors' overthrowing of a demonised Richard, appeared at roughly the same time as Marlowe's play.

As a medium for 'history', the theatre was an unstable and highly suggestive cultural institution. One of the many reservations that Elizabethan critics had about the theatre was that it allowed men to dress and behave like kings, implicitly demystifying (and in a public arena to boot) the aura of divinity that successful monarchs had so carefully cultivated. Moreover, the theatre condensed or extracted themes that were pertinent to its audiences, so that a play like *Edward II* spoke to them of issues that were extremely topical and sensitive in an intimate and unsettling way. It is no wonder, for example, that Elizabeth considered that Shakespeare's *Richard II*, a play often compared to *Edward II* for its portrayal of the undermining power of favourites, suggested something of the circle of influence in her own court.

Marlowe's depiction of Edward as a weak king unable to mediate between his personal desires and his public duty sets up a number of conflicts that might have seemed entirely relevant in late Tudor England. The figure of Gaveston embodies a number of 'alien' values and characteristics in the dramatic world of the

play that were also a cause of anxiety in the Elizabethan court; as such, he is a kind of catalyst, provoking reaction and conflict which show the deep fault-lines within sovereignty itself. First, there is Gaveston's foreignness: Marlowe is at pains to emphasise his French origins and Italian clothes and manners, in a framework of references that serves to distinguish him from the English court. This might have endorsed the contemporary post-Armada suspicion of foreign influence that dominated Tudor domestic and foreign policy. In fact the play is also laced with anti-Catholic sentiment that positions it ideologically in the realm of late sixteenth-century Reformation thinking rather than in its historical medieval setting. Edward's tirade against Rome's interference in English affairs (I.iv.97–105) may, when the play was first performed, have served to reinforce popular Tudor feeling against residual Catholic support and the increasing intolerance of established church structures.

Second is the question of Gaveston's social rank. Few plays of the period are quite as centred on questions of title and family; the barons' response (III.ii.65–7) to Edward's casual bestowal of titles on the lowly Gaveston (I.i.154–6) disrupts the feudal certainties of the historical world of the play, but begged questions too about the distribution of power and favour that also dominated the court of Elizabeth. Edward's indulgence of his favourite threatened the institutions that monarchy was supposed to endorse and perpetuate, showing how susceptible these were to personal whim and political expedience, but it also raised the historical spectre of the divided kingdom, a spectre that haunted Tudor administrations from a more recent past.

For modern audiences the play's forthright presentation of homosexuality is perhaps the most striking element of the play. Sodomy was a capital offence in Marlowe's time, but not, surprisingly perhaps, the taboo subject of later centuries. Although the nobles are quick to describe Edward's desires as unnatural, it is not his passion itself that offends so much as the transgression of social hierarchies. Indeed, Mortimer Senior cites Alexander, Hercules, Achilles, Tully and Socrates as great men who had their 'minions', and hopes that, as far as Edward is concerned, 'riper years will wean him from such toys'

(I.iv.402). The play contains scenes of verbal and physical homosexual exchange that would have offended the censors of the twentieth-century theatre; in the twenty-first century the play asks us to examine Tudor codes of friendship (and the classical models the Tudors admired) for evidence of a discontinuity in the treatment of homosexuality across the centuries.

*Edward II* emerges as a radical play that would have disturbed and challenged its Elizabethan audiences. Its dramatic enactment of the deposition and murder of a king, its investigation of the cycle and circles of sovereignty, and its examination of the power of rhetoric to shape social and political realities, all lead to a question that was constantly debated in Marlowe's time, especially as Elizabeth aged and the problem of the succession loomed: if a monarch's power is derived from God, what rights have their subjects? At the end of *Edward II*, as a new and unpromising cycle begins with Edward III, the talk is of retribution, fates, tragedy and lost innocence; there is little scope for analysis or reform. It is as if the shockingly graphic death of Edward, and his scream, which (according to Holinshed) 'did move many within the castle and town of Berkeley to compassion', has reduced language itself to a formulaic dullness, leaving the audience to open debate about the issues that the play itself closes down.

### Textual note

This edition is based on the octavo edition of 1594, the single copy of which is held by the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich in Switzerland (referred to in the footnotes to the text as Q). Some improvements to punctuation and spelling were made in subsequent editions in 1598, 1612 and 1622. We have followed other editors in introducing act and scene divisions, and in addressing the many inconsistencies in stage directions, speech prefixes and place names that appear in the early editions. Extracts from the principal source for the play, Ralph Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577), and other related documents are usefully reproduced in the edition of the play by Charles Forker.

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- Anon., *Jack Straw* (1591)
- Anon., *Arden of Faversham* (1592)
- Anon., *Thomas of Woodstock* (1592)
- William Shakespeare, *Richard III* (1593)
- William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (1595)
- Anthony Munday *et al.*, *Sir Thomas More* (1595)
- William Shakespeare, *King John* (1596)
- William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Parts I and II* (1597)
- William Shakespeare, *Henry V* (1599)
- Thomas Heywood *et al.*, *Edward IV, Parts I and II* (1599)
- Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Blackness* (1605)
- John Fletcher and William Shakespeare, *Henry VIII* (1613)
- Elizabeth Cary, *The Raign and Death of Edward II* (1626)  
[extracted in Purkiss 1994]
- John Ford, *Perkin Warbeck* (1633)

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# Edward II (1592)

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## Dramatis personae

EDWARD II, *King of England*  
ISABELLA, *Queen of England, the King of France's sister*  
PRINCE EDWARD, *their son, later King Edward III*  
EDMUND, EARL OF KENT, *brother of Edward II*  
PIERS GAVESTON, *later Earl of Cornwall*  
LADY MARGARET DE CLARE, *daughter of the Earl of Gloucester, niece of Edward II, engaged to Piers Gaveston*  
GUY, EARL OF WARWICK  
EARL OF ARUNDEL (*Edmund Fitzalan*)  
EARL OF PEMBROKE (*Aymer de Valence*)  
SIR JOHN MALTRIVERS  
SIR THOMAS GOURNEY  
THOMAS, EARL OF LANCASTER  
HENRY, EARL OF LEICESTER  
SIR THOMAS BERKELEY  
MORTIMER SENIOR (*Roger Mortimer of Chirke*)  
MORTIMER JUNIOR (*Roger Mortimer of Wigmore*), *his nephew*  
SPENCER SENIOR (*Hugh le Despenser*), EARL OF WINCHESTER  
SPENCER JUNIOR (*Hugh le Despenser*), EARL OF WILTSHIRE, *later Earl of Gloucester, his son*  
THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (*Walter Reynolds*)  
THE BISHOP OF COVENTRY (*Walter Langton*)  
THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER (*John Stratford*)  
THE ABBOT OF NEATH  
HENRY DE BEAUMONT, *a supporter of the King*  
SIR WILLIAM TRUSSEL, *a representative of the Parliament*

SIR JOHN OF HAINAULT, *a supporter of the Queen*  
BALDOCK, *a scholar, tutor to Lady Margaret*  
LIGHTBORNE, *an assassin*  
LEVUNE, *a Frenchman*  
RHYS AP HOWELL  
JAMES, *Pembroke's servant*  
A HORSE-BOY, *Pembroke's servant*  
THREE POOR MEN  
THE CLERK OF THE CROWN  
PEMBROKE'S MEN  
A CHAPLAIN  
A HERALD  
A POST FROM SCOTLAND  
A POST FROM FRANCE  
THE MAYOR OF BRISTOL  
A MOWER  
THE KING'S CHAMPION  
*Lords, Ladies-in-Waiting, Soldiers, Monks, Guards, Attendants, Servants*

### *The scene*

ENGLAND AND FRANCE

## Act I, scene i

*Enter GAVESTON reading on a letter that was brought him from the King*

GAVESTON 'My father is deceased; come, Gaveston,  
And share the kingdom with thy dearest friend.'  
Ah, words that make me surfeit with delight!

---

3 surfeit: overflow



What greater bliss can hap to Gaveston,  
 Than live and be the favourite of a king?  
 Sweet prince, I come; these, these thy amorous lines  
 Might have enforced me to have swum from France,  
 And, like Leander, gasped upon the sand,  
 So thou wouldst smile and take me in thy arms.  
 The sight of London to my exiled eyes 10  
 Is as Elysium to a new-come soul;  
 Not that I love the city or the men,  
 But that it harbours him I hold so dear,  
 The King, upon whose bosom let me die,  
 And with the world be still at enmity.  
 What need the arctic people love starlight,  
 To whom the sun shines both by day and night?  
 Farewell, base stooping to the lordly peers;  
 My knee shall bow to none but to the King.  
 As for the multitude, that are but sparks 20  
 Raked up in embers of their poverty,  
*Tanti!* I'll fan first on the wind  
 That glanceth at my lips and flieth away.

Enter THREE POOR MEN

But how now, what are these?  
 POOR MEN Such as desire your worship's service.  
 GAVESTON What canst thou do?  
 1 POOR MAN I can ride.  
 GAVESTON But I have no horses. What art thou?  
 2 POOR MAN A traveller. 29  
 GAVESTON Let me see, thou wouldst do well to wait at  
 my trencher and tell me lies at dinner-time; and, as I  
 like your discoursing, I'll have you. And what art  
 thou?  
 3 POOR MAN A soldier, that hath served against the Scot.  
 GAVESTON Why, there are hospitals for such as you;  
 I have no war, and therefore, sir, be gone.  
 3 POOR MAN Farewell, and perish by a soldier's hand,  
 That wouldst reward them with an hospital.

4 hap: happen to

7 France: Edward I had exiled Gaveston to his home in Ponthieu, Gascony

8 Leander: Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* (c. 1593, published in 1598 with additional lines by George Chapman) retold the classical story of Leander who swam the Hellespont each night to be with his lover, Hero

11 Elysium: the classical Greek name for heaven

14 die: a) swoon; b) enjoy sexual orgasm

20-1 multitude, that . . . their poverty: the multitude are mere embers by comparison with Edward, who burns like the sun

22 *Tanti!*: 'So much for that' (corruption of *tant' è*) (Italian)

31 trencher: plate, or place at a table

lies: travellers' tales

34 the Scot: Edward I's wars against the Scots (led by Robert the Bruce)

35 hospitals: often squalid 'spital houses' for the poor, including ex-soldiers

GAVESTON (*Aside*) Ay, ay. These words of his move me as much

As if a goose should play the porcupine, 40  
 And dart her plumes, thinking to pierce my breast.  
 But yet it is no pain to speak men fair;  
 I'll flatter these, and make them live in hope.  
 (*To them*) You know that I came lately out of France,  
 And yet I have not viewed my lord the King;  
 If I speed well, I'll entertain you all.

POOR MEN We thank your worship.

GAVESTON I have some business; leave me to myself.

POOR MEN We will wait here about the court. *Exeunt*

GAVESTON Do. These are not men for me; 50

I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,  
 Musicians, that with touching of a string  
 May draw the pliant King which way I please.  
 Music and poetry is his delight;  
 Therefore I'll have Italian masques by night,  
 Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows;  
 And in the day when he shall walk abroad,  
 Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad,  
 My men like satyrs grazing on the lawns  
 Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay; 60  
 Sometime a lovely boy in Dian's shape,  
 With hair that gilds the water as it glides,  
 Crowns of pearl about his naked arms,  
 And in his sportful hands an olive tree  
 To hide those parts which men delight to see,  
 Shall bathe him in a spring; and there hard by,  
 One like Actaeon peeping through the grove,

41 And dart . . . my breast: it was thought that porcupines could shoot their quills, if under threat

46 speed well: prosper (by rising in social rank)  
 entertain: take into service

51 wanton: lascivious  
 pleasant wits: pleasing, witty companions

53 pliant: easily influenced, manipulated

55 masques: elaborate courtly entertainments originating in Italy, they became popular in the courts of Elizabeth I and the early Stuarts. Gaveston's allusion is, therefore, anachronistic

57 abroad: outdoors

58 sylvan nymphs: female spirits of the woods

59 satyrs: part-human and part-goat, satyrs are associated with Bacchus, the classical god of wine and revelry

60 antic: grotesque

hay: country dance involving snake-like movement

61 Dian's shape: Diana was the classical goddess of the moon

63 Crowns: bracelets

64 sportful: playful

66 hard: near

67 Actaeon: in classical mythology Actaeon spied on the goddess Diana as she bathed; as punishment she turned him into a stag and he was then killed by his own hunting dogs

Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,  
 And running in the likeness of an hart,  
 By yelping hounds pulled down, and seem to die. 70  
 Such things as these best please his majesty.  
 My lord! Here comes the King and the nobles  
 From the parliament; I'll stand aside.

*Enter* EDWARD THE KING, LANCASTER, MORTIMER SENIOR, MORTIMER JUNIOR, EDMUND, EARL OF KENT, GUY, EARL OF WARWICK, *and attendants*

EDWARD Lancaster.

LANCASTER My lord?

GAVESTON *(Aside)* That Earl of Lancaster do I abhor.

EDWARD Will you not grant me this? *(Aside)* In spite of them

I'll have my will, and these two Mortimers  
 That cross me thus shall know I am displeased.

MORTIMER SENIOR If you love us, my lord, hate Gaveston. 80

GAVESTON *(Aside)* That villain Mortimer, I'll be his death.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Mine uncle here, this earl, and I myself

Were sworn to your father at his death,  
 That he should ne'er return into the realm;  
 And know, my lord, ere I will break my oath,  
 This sword of mine that should offend your foes,  
 Shall sleep within the scabbard at thy need,  
 And underneath thy banners march who will,  
 For Mortimer will hang his armour up.

GAVESTON *(Aside)* *Mort Dieu!* 90

EDWARD Well Mortimer, I'll make thee rue these words.

Beseems it thee to contradict thy king?  
 Frownst thou thereat, aspiring Lancaster?  
 The sword shall plane the furrows of thy brows  
 And hew these knees that now are grown so stiff.  
 I will have Gaveston; and you shall know  
 What danger 'tis to stand against your king.

GAVESTON *(Aside)* Well done, Ned.

LANCASTER My lord, why do you thus incense your peers

That naturally would love and honour you, 100  
 But for that base and obscure Gaveston?  
 Four earldoms have I besides Lancaster:

73 stand aside: Gaveston retreats to the side or back of the stage until l. 139

79 cross: oppose

90 *Mort Dieu!*: 'by God's death', reminding us of Gaveston's French origins. Later in the play 'Latin is used to characterise English nobility' (Kinney)

91 rue: regret

92 Beseems it thee: 'is it fitting for you'

98 Ned: familiar name for Edward

100 naturally: by reason of social rank

Derby, Salisbury, Lincoln, Leicester.  
 These will I sell to give my soldiers pay,  
 Ere Gaveston shall stay within the realm.  
 Therefore if he be come, expel him straight.

KENT Barons and earls, your pride hath made me mute.  
 But now I'll speak, and to the proof I hope:

I do remember in my father's days,  
 Lord Percy of the North, being highly moved, 110  
 Braved Mowbery in presence of the King.  
 For which, had not his highness loved him well,  
 He should have lost his head, but with his look  
 The undaunted spirit of Percy was appeased,  
 And Mowbery and he were reconciled.  
 Yet dare you brave the King unto his face?  
 Brother, revenge it; and let these their heads  
 Preach upon poles for trespass of their tongues.

WARWICK O, our heads!

EDWARD Ay, yours; and therefore I would wish you grant. 120

WARWICK Bridle thy anger, gentle Mortimer.

MORTIMER JUNIOR I cannot, nor I will not; I must speak.

Cousin, our hands I hope shall fence our heads,  
 And strike off his that makes you threaten us.  
 Come uncle, let us leave the brainsick King,  
 And henceforth parley with our naked swords.

MORTIMER SENIOR Welshry hath men enough to save our heads.

WARWICK All Warwickshire will love him for my sake.

LANCASTER And northward Gaveston hath many friends.

Adieu my lord; and either change your mind, 130  
 Or look to see the throne where you should sit  
 To float in blood, and at thy wanton head  
 The glozing head of thy base minion thrown.

*Exeunt* NOBLES *except* KENT

EDWARD I cannot brook these haughty menaces:  
 Am I a king and must be overruled?

108 to the proof: irrefutably

110 moved: angry

111 Braved: challenged

118 Preach upon poles: the heads of executed traitors were displayed as a warning to others: see *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, II.469-70

120 grant: assent

123 Cousin: Mortimer Junior's use of this familiar term to his king is presumptuous  
 fence: shield

126 parley: negotiate

127 Welshry: the people of Wales

129 And northward . . . many friends: meant ironically.  
 Lancaster implies exactly the opposite

133 glozing: flattering

minion: a) servant; b) homosexual lover, derived from *mignon* (sweet) (French)

134 brook: endure

Brother, display my ensigns in the field.  
 I'll bandy with the barons and the earls,  
 And either die or live with Gaveston.  
 GAVESTON I can no longer keep me from my lord. 139  
*He steps forward*  
 EDWARD What, Gaveston! Welcome! Kiss not my hand;  
 Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee!  
 Why shouldst thou kneel; knowest thou not who I  
 am?  
 Thy friend, thy self, another Gaveston!  
 Not Hylas was more mourned of Hercules  
 Than thou hast been of me since thy exile.  
 GAVESTON And since I went from hence, no soul in  
 hell  
 Hath felt more torment than poor Gaveston.  
 EDWARD I know it. (*To KENT*) Brother, welcome home  
 my friend.  
 (*To GAVESTON*) Now let the treacherous Mortimers  
 conspire,  
 And that high-minded Earl of Lancaster. 150  
 I have my wish, in that I joy thy sight,  
 And sooner shall the sea o'erwhelm my land  
 Than bear the ship that shall transport thee hence.  
 I here create thee Lord High Chamberlain,  
 Chief Secretary to the state and me,  
 Earl of Cornwall, King and Lord of Man.  
 GAVESTON My lord, these titles far exceed my worth.  
 KENT Brother, the least of these may well suffice  
 For one of greater birth than Gaveston. 159  
 EDWARD Cease brother for I cannot brook these words.  
 (*To GAVESTON*) Thy worth, sweet friend, is far above  
 my gifts,  
 Therefore to equal it, receive my heart.  
 If for these dignities thou be envied,  
 I'll give thee more, for but to honour thee  
 Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment.  
 Fear'st thou thy person? Thou shalt have a guard.  
 Wants thou gold? Go to my treasury.  
 Wouldst thou be loved and feared? Receive my seal,  
 Save or condemn, and in our name command  
 What so thy mind affects or fancy likes. 170

136 ensigns: military banners  
 137 bandy: take and return blows (a metaphor from tennis)  
 144 Hylas: Hercules was grief-stricken when his beloved  
 youth Hylas was killed by water nymphs during the  
 voyage of the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece  
 150 high-minded: arrogant  
 151 joy: enjoy  
 156 King and Lord of Man: the Isle of Man enjoyed a certain  
 autonomy and, according to Gill, their rulers were known  
 as kings until 1829. The idea of Gaveston being a 'Lord  
 of Man' may also have a homoerotic overtone  
 165 regiment: royal authority  
 168 seal: a material token of royal authority (usually a ring)  
 170 affects: desires

GAVESTON It shall suffice me to enjoy your love,  
 Which whiles I have, I think myself as great  
 As Caesar riding in the Roman street,  
 With captive kings at his triumphant car.

*Enter the* BISHOP OF COVENTRY

EDWARD Whither goes my lord of Coventry so fast?  
 BISHOP OF COVENTRY To celebrate your father's  
 exequies.  
 But is that wicked Gaveston returned?  
 EDWARD Ay, priest, and lives to be revenged on thee  
 That wert the only cause of his exile.  
 GAVESTON 'Tis true, and but for reverence of these  
 robes 180  
 Thou shouldst not plod one foot beyond this place.  
 BISHOP OF COVENTRY I did no more than I was bound  
 to do;  
 And Gaveston, unless thou be reclaimed,  
 As then I did incense the parliament,  
 So will I now, and thou shalt back to France.  
 GAVESTON Saving your reverence, you must pardon me.  
 EDWARD Throw off his golden mitre, rend his stole,  
 And in the channel christen him anew.

*Attacks* COVENTRY

KENT Ah brother, lay not violent hands on him,  
 For he'll complain unto the See of Rome. 190  
 GAVESTON Let him complain unto the See of Hell;  
 I'll be revenged on him for my exile.  
 EDWARD No, spare his life, but seize upon his goods.  
 Be thou lord bishop, and receive his rents,  
 And make him serve thee as thy chaplain.  
 I give him thee; here, use him as thou wilt.  
 GAVESTON He shall to prison, and there die in bolts.  
 EDWARD Ay, to the Tower, the Fleet, or where thou wilt.  
 BISHOP OF COVENTRY For this offence be thou accursed  
 of God.  
 EDWARD Who's there?

*Enter* GUARDS

Convey this priest to the Tower.

174 car: chariot  
 176 exequies: funeral rites  
 183 reclaimed: subdued  
 184 incense: incite  
 186 Saving your reverence: a polite term here used  
 sarcastically  
 187 Throw off . . . rend his stole: seize his ecclesiastical head-  
 dress (mitre) and tear his vestment (stole)  
 188 channel: open sewer  
 190 See of Rome: the Pope  
 194 rents: a) rents from church properties; b) ecclesiastical taxes  
 197 bolts: leg irons  
 198 the Tower, the Fleet: the Tower of London (used for  
 political prisoners), the Fleet prison (used for common  
 prisoners and debtors)

BISHOP OF COVENTRY True, true!  
*Exit BISHOP under guard*  
 EDWARD But in the meantime Gaveston, away, 201  
 And take possession of his house and goods.  
 Come, follow me, and thou shalt have my guard  
 To see it done and bring thee safe again.  
 GAVESTON What should a priest do with so fair a  
 house?  
 A prison may beseem his holiness.

*Exeunt*

## Act I, scene ii

*Enter both the MORTIMERS on one side, WARWICK, and LANCASTER on the other*

WARWICK 'Tis true, the Bishop is in the Tower,  
 And goods and body given to Gaveston.  
 LANCASTER What, will they tyrannize upon the  
 Church?  
 Ah, wicked King! Accursèd Gaveston!  
 This ground which is corrupted with their steps  
 Shall be their timeless sepulchre, or mine.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Well, let that peevish Frenchman  
 guard him sure;  
 Unless his breast be sword-proof he shall die.  
 MORTIMER SENIOR How now, why droops the Earl of  
 Lancaster?  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Wherefore is Guy of Warwick  
 discontent? 10  
 LANCASTER That villain Gaveston is made an earl.  
 MORTIMER SENIOR An earl!  
 WARWICK Ay, and besides, Lord Chamberlain of the  
 realm,  
 And Secretary too, and Lord of Man.  
 MORTIMER SENIOR We may not, nor we will not suffer  
 this.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Why post we not from hence to  
 levy men?  
 LANCASTER 'My Lord of Cornwall' now at every word;  
 And happy is the man whom he vouchsafes  
 For vailing of his bonnet one good look.

- 200 True, true: Coventry reacts to the fact that 'convey', as well as meaning 'conduct', commonly meant 'steal'  
 206 may beseem: may (ironically) be appropriate for a priest seeking ascetic conditions for holy meditation  
 2 goods and body: see I.i.193-4  
 3 tyrannize upon the church: Edward is seen as having usurped the authority of the Church by imprisoning a bishop  
 7 peevish: foolish  
 him: himself  
 11 villain: a) rascal; b) a person of low birth  
 16 post: travel at speed  
 levy men: raise an army  
 19 vailing: doffing

Thus, arm in arm, the King and he doth march— 20  
 Nay more, the guard upon his lordship waits,  
 And all the court begins to flatter him.  
 WARWICK Thus leaning on the shoulder of the King,  
 He nods, and scorns, and smiles at those that pass.  
 MORTIMER SENIOR Doth no man take exceptions at the  
 slave?  
 LANCASTER All stomach him, but none dare speak a  
 word.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Ah, that bewrays their baseness,  
 Lancaster.  
 Were all the earls and barons of my mind,  
 We'll hale him from the bosom of the King,  
 And at the court gate hang the peasant up, 30  
 Who, swoll'n with venom of ambitious pride,  
 Will be the ruin of the realm and us.

*Enter the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, talking to a CHAPLAIN*

WARWICK Here comes my Lord of Canterbury's grace.  
 LANCASTER His countenance bewrays he is displeasèd.  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY (*To CHAPLAIN*) First  
 were his sacred garments rent and torn,  
 Then laid they violent hands upon him next,  
 Himself imprisoned and his goods asseized;  
 This certify the Pope. Away, take horse!

*Exit CHAPLAIN*

LANCASTER My lord, will you take arms against the  
 King?  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY What need I? God  
 himself is up in arms 40  
 When violence is offer'd to the Church.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Then will you join with us that be  
 his peers  
 To banish or behead that Gaveston?  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY What else, my lords?  
 For it concerns me near;  
 The bishopric of Coventry is his.

*Enter ISABELLA the Queen*

MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, whither walks your  
 majesty so fast?  
 ISABELLA Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer,  
 To live in grief and baleful discontent;  
 For now my lord the King regards me not,  
 But dotes upon the love of Gaveston. 50

- 26 stomach: resent  
 27 bewrays: reveals  
 29 hale: drag  
 38 certify: inform  
 44 near: a) deeply; b) personally (as ecclesiastical business)  
 47 forest: wilderness, figuratively representing her sense of alienation from her husband  
 48 baleful: wretched

He claps his cheeks and hangs about his neck,  
Smiles in his face and whispers in his ears;  
And when I come he frowns, as who should say,  
'Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston.'

MORTIMER SENIOR Is it not strange that he is thus  
bewitched?

MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, return unto the court  
again.  
That sly inveigling Frenchman we'll exile,  
Or lose our lives; and yet, ere that day come,  
The King shall lose his crown, for we have power  
And courage too, to be revenged at full.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY But yet lift not your  
swords against the King.

LANCASTER No, but we'll lift Gaveston from hence.

WARWICK And war must be the means, or he'll stay  
still.

ISABELLA Then let him stay; for rather than my lord  
Shall be oppressed by civil mutinies,  
I will endure a melancholy life,  
And let him frolic with his minion.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY My lords, to ease all this  
but hear me speak.  
We and the rest that are his councillors  
Will meet and with a general consent 70  
Confirm his banishment with our hands and seals.

LANCASTER What we confirm the King will frustrate.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Then may we lawfully revolt from  
him.

WARWICK But say, my lord, where shall this meeting  
be?

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY At the New Temple.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Content.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY And in the meantime I'll  
entreat you all  
To cross to Lambeth, and there stay with me.

LANCASTER Come then, let's away.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, farewell.

ISABELLA Farewell, sweet Mortimer; and for my sake,  
Forbear to levy arms against the King. 81

MORTIMER JUNIOR Ay, if words will serve; if not, I  
must.

*Exeunt*

51 claps: pats

57 inveigling: a) deceiving; b) seducing

62 lift: a) steal; b) hang

63 still: forever

72 frustrate: defeat

75 New Temple: 'A building established and used by the Knights Templar until their suppression in 1308' (Wiggins and Lindsey) and 'in Edward II's time, the site of frequent disputes between the crown and wealthy subjects' (Kinney)

78 Lambeth: Lambeth Palace, the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury since 1197

**Act I, scene iii***Enter GAVESTON and the EARL OF KENT*

GAVESTON Edmund, the mighty prince of Lancaster,  
That hath more earldoms than an ass can bear,  
And both the Mortimers, two goodly men,  
With Guy of Warwick, that redoubted knight,  
Are gone towards Lambeth; there let them remain.

*Exeunt***60 Act I, scene iv***Enter NOBLES LANCASTER, WARWICK, PEMBROKE, MORTIMER SENIOR, MORTIMER JUNIOR, and the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, with attendants*

LANCASTER Here is the form of Gaveston's exile;  
May it please your lordship to subscribe your name.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY Give me the paper.

LANCASTER Quick, quick, my lord; I long to write my  
name.

WARWICK But I long more to see him banished hence.

MORTIMER JUNIOR The name of Mortimer shall fright  
the King,  
Unless he be declined from that base peasant.

*Enter EDWARD THE KING and GAVESTON and KENT. EDWARD takes the throne, seating GAVESTON at his side*

EDWARD What, are you moved that Gaveston sits  
here?  
It is our pleasure; we will have it so.

LANCASTER Your grace doth well to place him by your  
side, 10

For nowhere else the new earl is so safe.

MORTIMER SENIOR What man of noble birth can brook  
this sight?  
*Quam male conveniunt!*  
See what a scornful look the peasant casts.

PEMBROKE Can kingly lions fawn on creeping ants?

WARWICK Ignoble vassal, that like Phaëthon  
Aspir'st unto the guidance of the sun.

1 Edmund: Gaveston addresses Kent in an informal way

4 redoubted: feared

1 form: document

7 declined: separated

8 sits here: Gaveston takes the place normally reserved for Queen Isabella

13 *Quam male conveniunt!*: 'How badly they suit one another!'

16 Ignoble vassal: slave of low birth

Phaëthon: 'the son of Phoebus Apollo, the sun-god, who presumptuously asked his father to let him drive the chariot of the sun, lost control of the horses, was struck by a bolt of lightning, and plummeted disastrously to earth' (Forker)

MORTIMER JUNIOR Their downfall is at hand, their forces down;  
 We will not thus be faced and over-peered.  
 EDWARD Lay hands on that traitor Mortimer! 20  
 MORTIMER SENIOR Lay hands on that traitor Gaveston!  
*The NOBLES draw their swords*  
 KENT Is this the duty that you owe your king?  
 WARWICK We know our duties; let him know his peers.  
*The NOBLES seize GAVESTON*  
 EDWARD Whither will you bear him? Stay, or ye shall die.  
 MORTIMER SENIOR We are no traitors, therefore threaten not.  
 GAVESTON No, threaten not, my lord, but pay them home.  
 Were I a king—  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Thou villain, wherefore talks thou of a king,  
 That hardly art a gentleman by birth?  
 EDWARD Were he a peasant, being my minion, 30  
 I'll make the proudest of you stoop to him.  
 LANCASTER My lord, you may not thus disparage us.  
 Away, I say, with hateful Gaveston.  
 MORTIMER SENIOR And with the Earl of Kent that favours him.  
*Exeunt GAVESTON and KENT under guard*  
 EDWARD Nay, then lay violent hands upon your king.  
 Here, Mortimer, sit thou in Edward's throne;  
 Warwick and Lancaster, wear you my crown.  
 Was ever king thus overruled as I?  
 LANCASTER Learn then to rule us better and the realm.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR What we have done, our heart-blood shall maintain. 40  
 WARWICK Think you that we can brook this upstart pride?  
 EDWARD Anger and wrathful fury stops my speech.  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY Why are you moved? Be patient, my lord,  
 And see what we your councillors have done.  
*He gives the document of Gaveston's exile to EDWARD*  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR My lords, now let us all be resolute,  
 And either have our wills or lose our lives.  
 EDWARD Meet you for this, proud overdaring peers?  
 Ere my sweet Gaveston shall part from me,  
 This isle shall fleet upon the ocean  
 And wander to the unfrequented Inde. 50

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY You know that I am legate to the Pope;  
 On your allegiance to the See of Rome,  
 Subscribe as we have done to his exile.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Curse him if he refuse, and then may we  
 Depose him and elect another king.  
 EDWARD Ay, there it goes, but yet I will not yield.  
 Curse me. Depose me. Do the worst you can.  
 LANCASTER Then linger not, my lord, but do it straight.  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY Remember how the Bishop was abused;  
 Either banish him that was the cause thereof, 60  
 Or I will presently discharge these lords  
 Of duty and allegiance due to thee.  
 EDWARD It boots me not to threaten; I must speak fair,  
 The legate of the Pope will be obeyed.  
 (To CANTERBURY) My lord, you shall be Chancellor of the realm;  
 Thou Lancaster, High Admiral of our fleet.  
 Young Mortimer and his uncle shall be earls,  
 And you, Lord Warwick, President of the North,  
 (To PEMBROKE) And thou of Wales. If this content you not,  
 Make several kingdoms of this monarchy, 70  
 And share it equally amongst you all,  
 So I may have some nook or corner left  
 To frolic with my dearest Gaveston.  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY Nothing shall alter us; we are resolved.  
 LANCASTER Come, come, subscribe.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Why should you love him whom the world hates so?  
 EDWARD Because he loves me more than all the world.  
 Ah, none but rude and savage-minded men  
 Would seek the ruin of my Gaveston;  
 You that be noble born should pity him. 80  
 WARWICK You that are princely born should shake him off.  
 For shame subscribe, and let the lown depart.  
 MORTIMER SENIOR Urge him, my lord.  
 ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY Are you content to banish him the realm?  
 EDWARD I see I must, and therefore am content;  
 Instead of ink, I'll write it with my tears.  
*He signs the document*

19 faced: bullied  
 over-peered: looked down upon, with a pun on 'peer' (lord)  
 26 pay them home: chastise them  
 32 disparage: vilify  
 49 fleet: drift  
 50 Inde: a) India; b) East Indies. Edward's image implies 'to the ends of the earth' (Kinney)

51 legate: representative  
 54 Curse: excommunicate  
 61-2 Or I . . . to thee: when rulers were excommunicated, their subjects were absolved of all allegiance to them, as was the case with the excommunication of Elizabeth I in 1570  
 78 rude: uncivilised  
 82 lown: peasant

MORTIMER JUNIOR The King is love-sick for his  
minion.  
EDWARD 'Tis done, and now accursèd hand fall off.  
LANCASTER Give it me; I'll have it published in the  
streets.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR I'll see him presently dispatched  
away. 90  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY Now is my heart at ease.  
WARWICK And so is mine.  
PEMBROKE This will be good news to the common  
sort.  
MORTIMER SENIOR Be it or no, he shall not linger here.  
*Exeunt all, except EDWARD*  
EDWARD How fast they run to banish him I love;  
They would not stir, were it to do me good.  
Why should a king be subject to a priest?  
Proud Rome, that hatchest such imperial grooms,  
For these thy superstitious taper-lights,  
Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze,  
I'll fire thy crazèd buildings and enforce 100  
The papal towers to kiss the lowly ground,  
With slaughtered priests make Tiber's channel swell,  
And banks raised higher with their sepulchres.  
As for the peers that back the clergy thus,  
If I be king, not one of them shall live.

*Enter GAVESTON*

GAVESTON My lord, I hear it whispered everywhere  
That I am banished and must fly the land.  
EDWARD 'Tis true, sweet Gaveston. O were it false!  
The legate of the Pope will have it so,  
And thou must hence, or I shall be deposed. 110  
But I will reign to be revenged of them,  
And therefore, sweet friend, take it patiently.  
Live where thou wilt—I'll send thee gold enough.  
And long thou shalt not stay, or if thou dost,  
I'll come to thee; my love shall ne'er decline.  
GAVESTON Is all my hope turned to this hell of grief?  
EDWARD Rend not my heart with thy too-piercing  
words.  
Thou from this land, I from my self am banished.  
GAVESTON To go from hence grieves not poor  
Gaveston,  
But to forsake you, in whose gracious looks 120  
The blessedness of Gaveston remains,  
For nowhere else seeks he felicity.  
EDWARD And only this torments my wretched soul,  
That whether I will or no, thou must depart.

89 published: proclaimed  
97 imperial grooms: imperious servants  
98 taper-lights: candles for devotional use  
100 crazèd: a) cracked; b) unsound  
102 Tiber's channel: the River Tiber in Rome  
121 blessedness: exceptional happiness

Be Governor of Ireland in my stead,  
And there abide till fortune call thee home.  
Here, take my picture, and let me wear thine.  
*They exchange miniature portraits*  
O might I keep thee here, as I do this,  
Happy were I, but now most miserable.  
GAVESTON 'Tis something to be pitied of a king. 130  
EDWARD Thou shalt not hence; I'll hide thee,  
Gaveston.  
GAVESTON I shall be found, and then 'twill grieve me  
more.  
EDWARD Kind words and mutual talk makes our grief  
greater.  
Therefore, with dumb embracement, let us part—  
Stay, Gaveston, I cannot leave thee thus.  
GAVESTON For every look my lord drops down a tear;  
Seeing I must go, do not renew my sorrow.  
EDWARD The time is little that thou hast to stay,  
And therefore give me leave to look my fill.  
But come, sweet friend, I'll bear thee on thy way. 140  
GAVESTON The peers will frown.  
EDWARD I pass not for their anger; come, let's go.  
O that we might as well return as go.

*Enter EDMUND EARL OF KENT and QUEEN ISABELLA*

ISABELLA Whither goes my lord?  
EDWARD Fawn not on me, French strumpet; get thee  
gone.  
ISABELLA On whom but on my husband should I  
fawn?  
GAVESTON On Mortimer, with whom, ungentle  
Queen—  
I say no more; judge you the rest, my lord.  
ISABELLA In saying this, thou wrongst me, Gaveston.  
Is't not enough that thou corrupts my lord, 150  
And art a bawd to his affections,  
But thou must call mine honour thus in question?  
GAVESTON I mean not so; your grace must pardon me.  
EDWARD Thou art too familiar with that Mortimer,  
And by thy means is Gaveston exiled;  
But I would wish thee reconcile the lords,  
Or thou shalt ne'er be reconciled to me.  
ISABELLA Your highness knows it lies not in my power.

131 hence: go  
134 dumb: silent  
140 bear: accompany  
142 pass: care  
SD *Enter EDMUND*: Kent has no lines but his quiet  
witnessing of the exchange between Edward, Isabella and  
Gaveston is important in explaining his later actions  
147 Gaveston is the first to accuse Isabella of adultery  
151 bawd to his affections: procurer, pander to his (sexual)  
desires

EDWARD Away then, touch me not; come Gaveston.  
 ISABELLA Villain, 'tis thou that robb'st me of my lord.  
 GAVESTON Madam, 'tis you that rob me of my lord. 161  
 EDWARD Speak not unto her; let her droop and pine.  
 ISABELLA Wherein, my lord, have I deserved these  
 words?  
 Witness the tears that Isabella sheds,  
 Witness this heart, that sighing for thee breaks,  
 How dear my lord is to poor Isabel.  
 EDWARD And witness heaven how dear thou art to me.  
 There weep; for till my Gaveston be repealed,  
 Assure thyself thou com'st not in my sight.

*Exeunt EDWARD and GAVESTON and KENT*

ISABELLA O miserable and distressèd Queen! 170  
 Would when I left sweet France and was embarked,  
 That charming Circe, walking on the waves,  
 Had changed my shape, or at the marriage-day  
 The cup of Hymen had been full of poison,  
 Or with those arms that twined about my neck  
 I had been stifled, and not lived to see  
 The King my lord thus to abandon me.  
 Like frantic Juno will I fill the earth  
 With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries,  
 For never doted Jove on Ganymede 180  
 So much as he on cursèd Gaveston.  
 But that will more exasperate his wrath;  
 I must entreat him, I must speak him fair,  
 And be a means to call home Gaveston.  
 And yet he'll ever dote on Gaveston,  
 And so am I forever miserable.

*Enter the NOBLES LANCASTER, WARWICK, PEMBROKE,  
 MORTIMER SENIOR, and MORTIMER JUNIOR to ISABELLA  
 THE QUEEN*

159 touch me not: a) keep away from me; b) do not meddle  
 in my business  
 167 And witness . . . to me: Wiggins and Lindsey note that  
 as this line is spoken 'many productions have Edward  
 and Gaveston embrace or kiss as lovers'  
 168 repealed: recalled from exile  
 172 Circe: enchantress who turned Odysseus's men into pigs.  
 Marlowe's source is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, XIV  
 174 Hymen: god of marriage  
 175 those arms: Edward's arms  
 178-80 Like frantic . . . on Ganymede: Juno fell into a frenzy  
 of jealousy when her husband Jupiter chose the youth  
 Ganymede to be his cup-bearer. Marlowe's source is  
*Metamorphoses*, X. The comparison of Ganymede to  
 Gaveston in this scene 'underscores the homosexuality of  
 the king's passion, for a "Ganymede" was the standard  
 term in Marlowe's age for the younger partner in a love  
 affair between males' (Forker)  
 179 murmur: a) rumour; b) report  
 182 exasperate: aggravate  
 183 entreat: a) negotiate with; b) beg  
 fair: courteously  
 185 ever: always

LANCASTER Look where the sister of the King of  
 France  
 Sits wringing of her hands and beats her breast.  
 WARWICK The King, I fear, hath ill entreated her.  
 PEMBROKE Hard is the heart that injures such a saint.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR I know 'tis 'long of Gaveston she  
 weeps. 191  
 MORTIMER SENIOR Why? He is gone.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, how fares your grace?  
 ISABELLA Ah, Mortimer! Now breaks the King's hate  
 forth,  
 And he confesseth that he loves me not.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Cry quittance, madam, then; and  
 love not him.  
 ISABELLA No, rather will I die a thousand deaths.  
 And yet I love in vain; he'll ne'er love me.  
 LANCASTER Fear ye not, madam; now his minion's  
 gone,  
 His wanton humour will be quickly left.  
 ISABELLA O never, Lancaster! I am enjoined 200  
 To sue unto you all for his repeal.  
 This wills my lord, and this must I perform  
 Or else be banished from his highness' presence.  
 LANCASTER For his repeal! Madam, he comes not back  
 Unless the sea cast up his shipwreck body.  
 WARWICK And to behold so sweet a sight as that  
 There's none here but would run his horse to death.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR But madam, would you have us call  
 him home?  
 ISABELLA Ay, Mortimer, for till he be restored,  
 The angry King hath banished me the court; 210  
 And therefore, as thou lovest and tend'rest me,  
 Be thou my advocate unto these peers.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR What, would ye have me plead for  
 Gaveston?  
 MORTIMER SENIOR Plead for him he that will, I am  
 resolved.  
 LANCASTER And so am I; my lord, dissuade the Queen.  
 ISABELLA O Lancaster, let him dissuade the King,  
 For 'tis against my will he should return.  
 WARWICK Then speak not for him; let the peasant go.  
 ISABELLA 'Tis for myself I speak, and not for him.  
 PEMBROKE No speaking will prevail, and therefore  
 cease. 220  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Fair Queen, forbear to angle for the  
 fish  
 Which, being caught, strikes him that takes it dead—  
 189 entreated: treated  
 191 'long of: on account of (London dialect form)  
 195 Cry quittance: a) retaliate; b) renounce the marriage  
 199 wanton humour: amorous disposition (as in the  
 Elizabethan belief that bodily fluids (humours) were  
 responsible for the individual's state of mind)  
 200 enjoined: obliged  
 211 tend'rest: cares for



I mean that vile torpedo, Gaveston,  
That now, I hope, floats on the Irish seas.  
ISABELLA Sweet Mortimer, sit down by me a while,  
And I will tell thee reasons of such weight  
As thou wilt soon subscribe to his repeal.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR It is impossible; but speak your  
mind.  
ISABELLA Then thus—but none shall hear it but  
ourselves.  
ISABELLA *and* MORTIMER JUNIOR *talk apart*  
LANCASTER My lords, albeit the Queen win Mortimer,  
Will you be resolute and hold with me? 231  
MORTIMER SENIOR Not I, against my nephew.  
PEMBROKE Fear not, the Queen's words cannot alter  
him.  
WARWICK No? Do but mark how earnestly she pleads.  
LANCASTER And see how coldly his looks make denial.  
WARWICK She smiles! Now, for my life, his mind is  
changed.  
LANCASTER I'll rather lose his friendship, I, than grant.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR (*Returning*) Well, of necessity, it  
must be so.  
My lords, that I abhor base Gaveston  
I hope your honours make no question; 240  
And therefore, though I plead for his repeal,  
'Tis not for his sake, but for our avail—  
Nay, for the realm's behoof and for the King's.  
LANCASTER Fie Mortimer, dishonour not thyself!  
Can this be true, 'twas good to banish him?  
And is this true, to call him home again?  
Such reasons make white black and dark night day.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR My lord of Lancaster, mark the  
respect.  
LANCASTER In no respect can contraries be true. 249  
ISABELLA Yet, good my lord, hear what he can allege.  
WARWICK All that he speaks is nothing; we are resolved.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Do you not wish that Gaveston  
were dead?  
PEMBROKE I would he were.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Why then, my lord, give me but  
leave to speak.  
MORTIMER SENIOR But nephew, do not play the  
sophister.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR This which I urge is of a burning  
zeal

223 torpedo: cramp-fish or sting-ray  
224 floats: sails  
226 weight: importance  
234 mark: observe  
237 grant: assent  
242 avail: advantage  
243 behoof: benefit  
248 respect: special circumstances  
250 allege: offer as a reason  
255 sophister: philosopher who employs specious arguments

To mend the King and do our country good.  
Know you not Gaveston hath store of gold,  
Which may in Ireland purchase him such friends  
As he will front the mightiest of us all? 260  
And whereas he shall live and be beloved,  
'Tis hard for us to work his overthrow.  
WARWICK Mark you but that, my lord of Lancaster.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR But were he here, detested as he is,  
How easily might some base slave be suborned  
To greet his lordship with a poniard,  
And none so much as blame the murderer,  
But rather praise him for that brave attempt,  
And in the chronicle, enrol his name  
For purging of the realm of such a plague. 270  
PEMBROKE He saith true.  
LANCASTER Ay, but how chance this was not done  
before?  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Because, my lords, it was not  
thought upon.  
Nay more, when he shall know it lies in us  
To banish him, and then to call him home,  
'Twill make him vail the topflag of his pride  
And fear to offend the meanest nobleman.  
MORTIMER SENIOR But how if he do not, nephew?  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Then may we with some colour rise  
in arms, 280  
For howsoever we have borne it out,  
'Tis treason to be up against the King.  
So shall we have the people of our side,  
Which, for his father's sake, lean to the King  
But cannot brook a night-grown mushroom—  
Such a one as my lord of Cornwall is—  
Should bear us down of the nobility.  
And when the commons and the nobles join,  
'Tis not the King can buckler Gaveston;  
We'll pull him from the strongest hold he hath.  
My lords, if to perform this I be slack, 290  
Think me as base a groom as Gaveston.  
LANCASTER On that condition Lancaster will grant.

257 mend: reform  
260 front: confront  
261 whereas: while  
265 suborned: bribed  
266 poniard: dagger  
268 brave attempt: justified attack  
269 the chronicle: history  
276 vail the topflag: lower a flag (colour) in submission  
(naval)  
279 colour: pretext  
282 of: on  
284 night-grown mushroom: a metaphor for a political or  
social upstart (since mushrooms can spring up overnight)  
286 Should bear us down: overwhelm us  
288 buckler: shield  
289 hold: stronghold, castle  
291 groom: servant

PEMBROKE And so will Pembroke.

WARWICK And I.

MORTIMER SENIOR And I.

MORTIMER JUNIOR In this I count me highly gratified,

And Mortimer will rest at your command.

ISABELLA And when this favour Isabel forgets,

Then let her live abandoned and forlorn.

*Enter KING EDWARD mourning, with BEAUMONT and the  
CLERK OF THE CROWN, with attendants*

But see, in happy time, my lord the King, 300

Having brought the Earl of Cornwall on his way,

Is new returned. This news will glad him much,

Yet not so much as me; I love him more

Than he can Gaveston. Would he loved me

But half so much, then were I treble blessed.

EDWARD He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn.

Did never sorrow go so near my heart

As doth the want of my sweet Gaveston;

And could my crown's revenue bring him back,

I would freely give it to his enemies 310

And think I gained, having bought so dear a friend.

ISABELLA Hark how he harps upon his minion.

EDWARD My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,

Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,

And with the noise turns up my giddy brain

And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.

Ah, had some bloodless Fury rose from hell,

And with kingly sceptre struck me dead,

When I was forced to leave my Gaveston.

LANCASTER *Diablo!* What passions call you these? 320

ISABELLA My gracious lord, I come to bring you news.

EDWARD That you have parlied with your Mortimer.

ISABELLA That Gaveston, my lord, shall be repealed.

EDWARD Repealed? The news is too sweet to be true.

ISABELLA But will you love me if you find it so?

EDWARD If it be so, what will not Edward do?

ISABELLA For Gaveston, but not for Isabel.

EDWARD For thee, fair Queen, if thou lov'st Gaveston;

I'll hang a golden tongue about thy neck,

Seeing thou hast pleaded with so good success. 330

*He embraces her*

ISABELLA No other jewels hang about my neck

Than these, my lord; nor let me have more wealth

Than I may fetch from this rich treasury.

O how a kiss revives poor Isabel.

EDWARD Once more receive my hand, and let this be

A second marriage 'twixt thyself and me.

314 Cyclops' hammers: in classical mythology Cyclops forged thunderbolts for the gods

317 Fury: the Furies tormented wrongdoers in the underworld

320 *Diablo!*: the devil! (Spanish)

329 golden tongue: an item of jewellery

332 Than these: i.e. Edward's arms

ISABELLA And may it prove more happy than the first.

My gentle lord, bespeak these nobles fair

That wait attendance for a gracious look,

And on their knees salute your majesty. 340

*The NOBLES kneel*

EDWARD Courageous Lancaster, embrace thy king,

And as gross vapours perish by the sun,

Even so let hatred with thy sovereign's smile;

Live thou with me as my companion.

LANCASTER This salutation overjoys my heart.

EDWARD Warwick shall be my chiefest counsellor:

These silver hairs will more adorn my court

Than gaudy silks or rich embroidery.

Chide me, sweet Warwick, if I go astray.

WARWICK Slay me, my lord, when I offend your grace.

EDWARD In solemn triumphs and in public shows 351

Pembroke shall bear the sword before the King.

PEMBROKE And with this sword Pembroke will fight  
for you.

EDWARD But wherefore walks young Mortimer aside?

Be thou commander of our royal fleet,

Or if that lofty office like thee not,

I make thee here Lord Marshal of the realm.

MORTIMER JUNIOR My lord, I'll marshal so your  
enemies

As England shall be quiet and you safe.

EDWARD And as for you, Lord Mortimer of Chirke,

Whose great achievements in our foreign war 361

Deserves no common place nor mean reward,

Be you the general of the levied troops

That now are ready to assail the Scots.

MORTIMER SENIOR In this your grace hath highly  
honoured me,

For with my nature war doth best agree.

ISABELLA Now is the King of England rich and strong,

Having the love of his renowned peers.

EDWARD Ay, Isabel, ne'er was my heart so light.

Clerk of the Crown, direct our warrant forth 370

For Gaveston to Ireland; Beaumont, fly

As fast as Iris or Jove's Mercury.

338 bespeak: speak to

342 gross vapours: thick mists, fog

348 gaudy: ornate

352 the sword: the sword of state

356 like: please

360 Mortimer of Chirke: Mortimer Senior, whose estate was in the border (Marches) area of Shropshire (England) and Wales. Mortimer Junior (of Wigmore) held lands further south on the border between the English county of Herefordshire and Wales

370 Clerk of the Crown: an officer of the court responsible for drawing up writs

372 Iris or Jove's Mercury: in classical mythology Iris and Mercury were messengers for Juno and Jupiter respectively

BEAUMONT It shall be done, my gracious lord.  
*Exit BEAUMONT, with the clerk of the crown*

EDWARD Lord Mortimer, we leave you to your charge.  
 Now let us in and feast it royally  
 Against our friend the Earl of Cornwall comes.  
 We'll have a general tilt and tournament,  
 And then his marriage shall be solemnized;  
 For wot you not that I have made him sure  
 Unto our cousin, the Earl of Gloucester's heir? 380

LANCASTER Such news we hear, my lord.  
 EDWARD That day, if not for him, yet for my sake,  
 Who in the triumph will be challenger,  
 Spare for no cost; we will requite your love.

WARWICK In this, or aught, your highness shall  
 command us.

EDWARD Thanks, gentle Warwick; come, let's in and  
 revel. *Exeunt all, except the MORTIMERS*

MORTIMER SENIOR Nephew, I must to Scotland; thou  
 stayest here.

Leave now to oppose thyself against the King;  
 Thou seest by nature he is mild and calm,  
 And seeing his mind so dotes on Gaveston,  
 Let him without controlment have his will. 390

The mightiest kings have had their minions:  
 Great Alexander loved Hephaestion;

The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept;  
 And for Patroclus stern Achilles drooped.

And not kings only, but the wisest men:  
 The Roman Tully loved Octavius,  
 Grave Socrates, wild Alcibiades.

Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible  
 And promiseth as much as we can wish, 400  
 Freely enjoy that vain light-headed Earl,  
 For riper years will wean him from such toys.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Uncle, his wanton humour grieves  
 not me,

But this I scorn, that one so basely born  
 Should by his sovereign's favour grow so pert,  
 And riot it with the treasure of the realm

376 Against: until

379 sure: betrothed

380 the Earl of Gloucester's heir: i.e. Lady Margaret de Clare

391 controlment: restraint

393-5 Alexander loved . . . stern Achilles: 'famous male  
 companions and couples sometimes portrayed as  
 homosexual unions' (Kinney)

397 Tully loved Octavius: Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC),  
 a Roman statesman, and Octavius Caesar (63 BC-AD 14).  
 There is no recorded evidence of a homosexual  
 relationship between these two men although Cicero  
 expressed great loyalty to Octavius

398 Socrates, wild Alcibiades: Socrates, the Greek  
 philosopher (c. 450-404 BC) argued for the purity of  
 homosexual love. Alcibiades was his pupil

402 toys: trifles

While soldiers mutiny for want of pay.  
 He wears a lord's revenue on his back,  
 And Midas-like he jets it in the court  
 With base outlandish cullions at his heels, 410  
 Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show

As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appeared.

I have not seen a dapper jack so brisk;  
 He wears a short Italian hooded cloak,  
 Larded with pearl; and in his Tuscan cap  
 A jewel of more value than the crown.

Whiles other walk below, the King and he  
 From out a window laugh at such as we,  
 And flout our train and jest at our attire.  
 Uncle, 'tis this that makes me impatient. 420

MORTIMER SENIOR But nephew, now you see the King  
 is changed.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Then so am I, and live to do him  
 service;

But whiles I have a sword, a hand, a heart,  
 I will not yield to any such upstart.

You know my mind. Come, uncle, let's away. *Exeunt*

## Act II, scene i

*Enter SPENCER JUNIOR and BALDOCK*

BALDOCK Spencer,  
 Seeing that our lord th' Earl of Gloucester's dead,  
 Which of the nobles dost thou mean to serve?

SPENCER JUNIOR Not Mortimer, nor any of his side,  
 Because the King and he are enemies.

Baldock, learn this of me: a factious lord  
 Shall hardly do himself good, much less us;  
 But he that hath the favour of a king  
 May with one word advance us while we live.  
 The liberal Earl of Cornwall is the man 10

409 Midas-like: King Midas of Phrygia was given the power  
 of turning anything he touched into gold by the Greek  
 god Dionysus  
 jets: struts

410 outlandish cullions: foreign low fellows

412 Proteus: a sea god who could change shape

413 dapper jack: fashionable gentleman (see the character  
 Jack Dapper in *The Roaring Girl*)  
 brisk: smartly dressed

414-15 Italian hooded cloak: Gaveston's Italian clothes may  
 signify both his politics and his homosexuality since Italy  
 was thought of by the Elizabethans as a place of both  
 political (Machiavellian) intrigue and sexual 'deviance'  
 (see Introduction)

415 Larded: encrusted

417 other: others

419 flout our train: mock our attendants

6 factious: seditious

10 liberal: a) gentle (as in a gentleman); b) licentious

On whose good fortune Spencer's hope depends.  
 BALDOCK What, mean you then to be his follower?  
 SPENCER JUNIOR No, his companion; for he loves me  
 well  
 And would have once preferred me to the King.  
 BALDOCK But he is banished; there's small hope of  
 him.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Ay, for a while; but, Baldock, mark  
 the end:  
 A friend of mine told me in secrecy  
 That he's repealed and sent for back again;  
 And even now, a post came from the court  
 With letters to our lady from the King, 20  
 And as she read, she smiled, which makes me think  
 It is about her lover, Gaveston.  
 BALDOCK 'Tis like enough, for since he was exiled,  
 She neither walks abroad nor comes in sight.  
 But I had thought the match had been broke off  
 And that his banishment had changed her mind.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Our lady's first love is not wavering;  
 My life for thine, she will have Gaveston.  
 BALDOCK Then hope I by her means to be preferred,  
 Having read unto her since she was a child. 30  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Then, Baldock, you must cast the  
 scholar off  
 And learn to court it like a gentleman.  
 'Tis not a black coat and a little band,  
 A velvet-caped cloak, faced before with serge,  
 And smelling to a nosegay all the day,  
 Or holding of a napkin in your hand,  
 Or saying a long grace at a table's end,  
 Or making low legs to a nobleman,  
 Or looking downward, with your eyelids close,  
 And saying, 'Truly, an't may please your honour', 40  
 Can get you any favour with great men.  
 You must be proud, bold, pleasant, resolute,  
 And now and then, stab, as occasion serves.  
 BALDOCK Spencer, thou knowest I hate such formal  
 toys,  
 And use them but of mere hypocrisy.  
 Mine old lord, whiles he lived, was so precise

16 end: conclusion

20 our lady: Margaret de Clare, daughter of the Earl of Gloucester

30 Having read . . . a child: Baldock is Margaret's tutor

32 court it: behave like a courtier (rather than a scholar)

33-40 Spencer Junior describes the typical dress of a (sixteenth-century) poor scholar

35 nosegay: posy of flowers

36 napkin: handkerchief

37 at a table's end: i.e. at the socially inferior end of a formal meal

38 making low legs: bowing

43 stab: a) betray; b) make quick repartee (with pun on sexual intercourse)

That he would take exceptions at my buttons,  
 And, being like pins' heads, blame me for the  
 bigness,  
 Which made me curate-like in mine attire,  
 Though inwardly licentious enough 50  
 And apt for any kind of villainy.  
 I am none of these common pedants, I,  
 That cannot speak without '*propterea quod*'.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR But one of those that saith  
 '*quandoquidem*'  
 And hath a special gift to form a verb.  
 BALDOCK Leave off this jesting—here my lady comes.  
*They draw aside*

*Enter the* LADY MARGARET DE CLARE

LADY MARGARET The grief for his exile was not so much  
 As is the joy of his returning home.  
 This letter came from my sweet Gaveston.

*She reads a letter*

What needst thou, love, thus to excuse thyself? 60  
 I know thou couldst not come and visit me.  
 'I will not long be from thee, though I die':  
 This argues the entire love of my lord;  
 'When I forsake thee, death seize on my heart.'  
 But rest thee here where Gaveston shall sleep.  
 Now to the letter of my lord the King.

*She reads another letter*

He wills me to repair unto the court  
 And meet my Gaveston. Why do I stay,  
 Seeing that he talks thus of my marriage-day?  
 Who's there? Baldock? 70

BALDOCK and SPENCER JUNIOR *come forward*

See that my coach be ready; I must hence.

BALDOCK It shall be done, madam.

LADY MARGARET And meet me at the park pale  
 presently. *Exit* BALDOCK

Spencer, stay you and bear me company,  
 For I have joyful news to tell thee of.  
 My lord of Cornwall is a-coming over  
 And will be at the court as soon as we.

SPENCER JUNIOR I knew the King would have him  
 home again.

LADY MARGARET If all things sort out, as I hope they  
 will,

Thy service, Spencer, shall be thought upon. 80

53-4 '*propterea quod*' and '*quandoquidem*': both mean 'because',  
 'but presumably one was regarded as ponderous, the  
 other elegant. Baldock means he is no mere pedant,  
 using old-fashioned constructions' (J. B. Steane)

55 to form: to conjugate

67 repair: come

71 coach: an anachronistic reference

73 park pale: the fence of an estate  
 presently: directly

SPENCER JUNIOR I humbly thank your ladyship.  
LADY MARGARET Come, lead the way; I long till I am  
there.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene ii

*Enter* EDWARD, ISABELLA THE QUEEN, LANCASTER,  
MORTIMER JUNIOR, WARWICK, PEMBROKE, KENT,  
*attendants*

EDWARD The wind is good, I wonder why he stays.

I fear me he is wrecked upon the sea.

ISABELLA Look, Lancaster, how passionate he is,  
And still his mind runs on his minion.

LANCASTER My lord—

EDWARD How now, what news? Is Gaveston arrived?

MORTIMER JUNIOR Nothing but Gaveston! What  
means your grace?

You have matters of more weight to think upon;  
The King of France sets foot in Normandy.

EDWARD A trifle! We'll expel him when we please. 10

But tell me, Mortimer, what's thy device  
Against the stately triumph we decreed?

MORTIMER JUNIOR A homely one, my lord, not worth  
the telling.

EDWARD Prithee let me know it.

MORTIMER JUNIOR But seeing you are so desirous, thus  
it is:

A lofty cedar tree fair flourishing,  
On whose top branches kingly eagles perch,  
And by the bark a canker creeps me up  
And gets unto the highest bough of all;  
The motto: *Æque tandem*. 20

EDWARD And what is yours, my lord of Lancaster?

LANCASTER My lord, mine's more obscure than  
Mortimer's:

Pliny reports there is a flying fish  
Which all the other fishes deadly hate,  
And therefore, being pursued, it takes the air;  
No sooner is it up, but there's a fowl  
That seizeth it. This fish, my lord, I bear;  
The motto this: *Undique mors est*.

EDWARD Proud Mortimer! Ungentle Lancaster!  
Is this the love you bear your sovereign? 30

Is this the fruit your reconciliation bears?  
Can you in words make show of amity,  
And in your shields display your rancorous minds?  
What call you this but private libelling

Against the Earl of Cornwall and my brother?

ISABELLA Sweet husband, be content; they all love you.

EDWARD They love me not that hate my Gaveston.

I am that cedar; shake me not too much.

And you the eagles; soar ye ne'er so high,  
I have the jesses that will pull you down, 40

And '*Æque tandem*' shall that canker cry  
Unto the proudest peer of Britainy.

Though thou compar'st him to a flying fish,

And threatenest death whether he rise or fall,

'Tis not the hugest monster of the sea

Nor foulest harpy that shall swallow him.

MORTIMER JUNIOR (*To the NOBLES*) If in his absence  
thus he favours him,

What will he do whenas he shall be present?

*Enter* GAVESTON

LANCASTER That shall we see: look where his lordship  
comes.

EDWARD My Gaveston! 50

Welcome to Tynemouth, welcome to thy friend.

Thy absence made me droop and pine away;

For as the lovers of fair Danaë,

When she was locked up in a brazen tower,

Desired her more and waxed outrageous,

So did it sure with me; and now thy sight

Is sweeter far than was thy parting hence

Bitter and irksome to my sobbing heart.

GAVESTON Sweet lord and King, your speech  
preventeth mine,

23 Pliny: Roman scholar (AD 23–79)

28 *Undique mors est*: death is on all sides

35 my brother: i.e. Gaveston

40 jesses: straps fastened to the legs of hunting birds

42 Britainy: Britain

46 harpy: classical bird-like creatures with female faces and  
breasts

53 Danaë: in classical mythology she was imprisoned in a  
tower by her father after an oracle prophesied that her  
child would kill him. She became pregnant by the god  
Jupiter who entered the tower as a shower of gold

55 waxed outrageous: grew unrestrained

59 preventeth: anticipates

82 long: am restless

2 upon the sea: Edward is waiting for Gaveston near  
Tynemouth Castle in the north-east of England as  
though Gaveston is sailing there from Ireland. The  
geography is anomalous, but Marlowe conflates  
Gaveston's two banishments, the first to Flanders and  
the second to Ireland. There is evidence that the two  
met actually met at Chester in the north-west of  
England

4 runs on: is preoccupied by

9 Normandy: then part of English crown territory

11 device: heraldic emblem

12 Against the stately triumph: prepared for the public  
entertainment

13 homely: plain

16 lofty cedar tree: symbol of social order

18 canker: worm (i.e. Gaveston)

creeps me up: creeps up

20 *Æque tandem*: equal in height

- Yet have I words left to express my joy:  
The shepherd nipped with biting winter's rage  
Frolics not more to see the painted spring  
Than I do to behold your majesty.
- EDWARD Will none of you salute my Gaveston?  
LANCASTER Salute him? Yes! Welcome, Lord  
Chamberlain.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Welcome is the good Earl of  
Cornwall.  
WARWICK Welcome, Lord Governor of the Isle of Man.  
PEMBROKE Welcome, Master Secretary.  
KENT Brother, do you hear them? **69**  
EDWARD Still will these earls and barons use me thus!  
GAVESTON My lord, I cannot brook these injuries.  
ISABELLA (*Aside*) Ay me, poor soul, when these begin  
to jar.  
EDWARD Return it to their throats; I'll be thy warrant.  
GAVESTON Base leaden earls that glory in your birth,  
Go sit at home and eat your tenants' beef,  
And come not here to scoff at Gaveston,  
Whose mounting thoughts did never creep so low  
As to bestow a look on such as you.  
LANCASTER Yet I disdain not to do this for you.  
*Draws his sword*  
EDWARD Treason, treason! Where's the traitor? **79**  
PEMBROKE (*pointing to GAVESTON*) Here, here!  
EDWARD Convey hence Gaveston; they'll murder him.  
GAVESTON The life of thee shall salve this foul disgrace.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Villain, thy life, unless I miss mine  
aim. *He wounds GAVESTON*  
ISABELLA Ah, furious Mortimer, what hast thou done?  
MORTIMER JUNIOR No more than I would answer were  
he slain. *Exit GAVESTON with attendants*  
EDWARD Yes, more than thou canst answer, though he  
live;  
Dear shall you both aby this riotous deed.  
Out of my presence! Come not near the court.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR I'll not be barred the court for  
Gaveston. **89**  
LANCASTER We'll hale him by the ears unto the block.  
EDWARD Look to your own heads; his is sure enough.
- 
- 62 painted: colourful  
72 jar: quarrel  
73 Return it to their throats: 'reject their abuse'  
warrant: protection  
74 leaden: as in cheap coinage (as opposed to gold coins  
known as 'nobles')  
75 eat your tenants' beef: a peculiarly French insult as the  
French considered the English great eaters of beef; 'beef-  
witted' also meant 'stupid'  
82 salve: atone for  
85 answer: answer for  
87 both: i.e. Mortimer Junior and Lancaster  
aby: pay for  
91 sure: safe
- 60** WARWICK Look to your own crown, if you back him  
thus.  
KENT Warwick, these words do ill beseem thy years.  
EDWARD Nay, all of them conspire to cross me thus;  
But if I live, I'll tread upon their heads  
That think with high looks thus to tread me down.  
Come, Edmund, let's away and levy men;  
'Tis war that must abate these barons' pride.  
*Exit EDWARD THE KING, with ISABELLA and KENT*  
WARWICK Let's to our castles, for the King is moved.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Moved may he be and perish in his  
wrath. **100**  
LANCASTER Cousin, it is no dealing with him now.  
He means to make us stoop by force of arms,  
And therefore let us jointly here protest  
To prosecute that Gaveston to the death.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR By heaven, the abject villain shall  
not live.  
WARWICK I'll have his blood or die in seeking it.  
PEMBROKE The like oath Pembroke takes.  
LANCASTER And so doth Lancaster.  
Now send our heralds to defy the King  
And make the people swear to put him down.  
*Enter a POST*  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Letters? From whence? **110**  
POST From Scotland, my lord.  
LANCASTER Why how now, cousin, how fares all our  
friends?  
MORTIMER JUNIOR (*Reading a letter*) My uncle's taken  
prisoner by the Scots.  
LANCASTER We'll have him ransomed, man; be of good  
cheer.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR They rate his ransom at five  
thousand pound.  
Who should defray the money but the King,  
Seeing he is taken prisoner in his wars?  
I'll to the King.  
LANCASTER Do cousin, and I'll bear thee company. **119**  
WARWICK Meantime, my lord of Pembroke and myself  
Will to Newcastle here and gather head.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR About it then, and we will follow  
you.  
LANCASTER Be resolute and full of secrecy.  
WARWICK I warrant you.  
*Exeunt all but MORTIMER JUNIOR and LANCASTER*  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Cousin, an if he will not ransom  
him,  

---

93 these words . . . thy years: Warwick was a senior peer and  
Kent implies that he should have more wisdom  
101 Cousin: a broad term for a relative or friend  
103 protest: determine  
104 prosecute: pursue  
116 defray: pay  
121 gather head: raise an army

I'll thunder such a peal into his ears  
As never subject did unto his king.  
LANCASTER Content; I'll bear my part. Holla! Who's  
there?

*Enter a GUARD*

MORTIMER JUNIOR Ay, marry, such a guard as this  
doth well.

LANCASTER Lead on the way.

GUARD Whither will your lordships?

MORTIMER JUNIOR Whither else but to the King? 131

GUARD His highness is disposed to be alone.

LANCASTER Why, so he may, but we will speak to him.

GUARD You may not in, my lord.

MORTIMER JUNIOR May we not?

*Enter EDWARD and KENT*

EDWARD How now, what noise is this?

Who have we there? Is't you? *He starts to exit,  
ignoring MORTIMER JUNIOR and LANCASTER*

MORTIMER JUNIOR Nay, stay, my lord; I come to bring  
you news:

Mine uncle's taken prisoner by the Scots.

EDWARD Then ransom him. 140

LANCASTER 'Twas in your wars: you should ransom  
him.

MORTIMER JUNIOR And you shall ransom him, or  
else—

KENT What, Mortimer, you will not threaten him?

EDWARD Quiet yourself; you shall have the broad seal  
To gather for him throughout the realm.

LANCASTER Your minion Gaveston hath taught you  
this.

MORTIMER JUNIOR My lord, the family of the  
Mortimers

Are not so poor but, would they sell their land,  
Would levy men enough to anger you.

We never beg, but use such prayers as these. 150  
*He grasps his sword*

EDWARD Shall I still be haunted thus?

MORTIMER JUNIOR Nay, now you are here alone, I'll  
speak my mind.

LANCASTER And so will I; and then, my lord, farewell.

MORTIMER JUNIOR The idle triumphs, masques,  
lascivious shows,  
And prodigal gifts bestowed on Gaveston  
Have drawn thy treasure dry and made thee weak;

128 Content: agreed

129 marry: to be sure (contracted from the oath 'By Mary')

134 in: enter

144 broad seal: the authority that would allow Mortimer  
Junior to beg for money (implying that he has none)

145 throughout: throughout

151 haunted: pursued, tormented

155 prodigal: lavish

The murmuring commons overstretched hath.  
LANCASTER Look for rebellion, look to be deposed:

Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,  
And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates; 160

The wild O'Neill, with swarms of Irish kerns,

Lives uncontrolled within the English pale;

Unto the walls of York the Scots made road

And, unresisted, drave away rich spoils.

MORTIMER JUNIOR The haughty Dane commands the  
narrow seas,

While in the harbour ride thy ships unrigged.

LANCASTER What foreign prince sends thee  
ambassadors?

MORTIMER JUNIOR Who loves thee but a sort of  
flatterers?

LANCASTER Thy gentle Queen, sole sister to Valois,  
Complains that thou hast left her all forlorn. 170

MORTIMER JUNIOR Thy court is naked, being bereft of  
those

That makes a king seem glorious to the world—

I mean the peers whom thou shouldst dearly love.

Libels are cast again thee in the street,

Ballads and rhymes made of thy overthrow.

LANCASTER The northern borderers, seeing their  
houses burnt,

Their wives and children slain, run up and down

Cursing the name of thee and Gaveston.

MORTIMER JUNIOR When wert thou in the field with  
banner spread?

But once! And then thy soldiers marched like players,

With garish robes, not armour; and thyself, 181

Bedaubed with gold, rode laughing at the rest,

Nodding and shaking of thy spangled crest

Where women's favours hung like labels down.

LANCASTER And thereof came it that the fleeing  
Scots,

To England's high disgrace, have made this jig:

'Maids of England, sore may you mourn,

157 murmuring commons overstretched hath: the  
discontented common people complain, presumably at  
the high levels of taxation

161 O'Neill: possibly a reference to Hugh O'Neill, an Ulster  
chieftain during the reign of Elizabeth I  
kerns: footsoldiers

162 English pale: the area of land around Dublin in Ireland  
preserved for English settlers, hence the expression  
'beyond the pale'

164 drave: drove

spoils: loot, plunder

165 the narrow seas: the English Channel

169 Valois: i.e. King Philip of France

174 Libels: subversive leaflets or 'broadsides'

180 players: actors

184 favours: tokens of affection (such as gloves or scarves)

labels: parchment strips for attaching seals to documents

185 fleeing: sneering

For your lemans you have lost at Bannocks bourne.  
 With a heave and a ho.  
 What weeneth the King of England, **190**  
 So soon to have won Scotland?  
 With a rombelow.<sup>1</sup>

MORTIMER JUNIOR Wigmore shall fly, to set my uncle  
 free.

LANCASTER And when 'tis gone, our swords shall  
 purchase more.  
 If ye be moved, revenge it as you can;  
 Look next to see us with our ensigns spread.  
*Exeunt* NOBLES LANCASTER and MORTIMER JUNIOR

EDWARD My swelling heart for very anger breaks!  
 How oft have I been baited by these peers  
 And dare not be revenged, for their power is great?  
 Yet, shall the crowing of these cockerels **200**  
 Affright a lion? Edward, unfold thy paws  
 And let their lives' blood slake thy fury's hunger.  
 If I be cruel and grow tyrannous,  
 Now let them thank themselves and rue too late.

KENT My lord, I see your love to Gaveston  
 Will be the ruin of the realm and you,  
 For now the wrathful nobles threaten wars;  
 And therefore, brother, banish him forever.

EDWARD Art thou an enemy to my Gaveston?  
 KENT Ay, and it grieves me that I favoured him. **210**

EDWARD Traitor, be gone; whine thou with Mortimer.  
 KENT So will I, rather than with Gaveston.  
 EDWARD Out of my sight, and trouble me no more.  
 KENT No marvel though thou scorn thy noble peers,  
 When I thy brother am rejected thus.  
 EDWARD Away! *Exit* KENT

Poor Gaveston, that hast no friend but me.  
 Do what they can, we'll live in Tynemouth here,  
 And, so I walk with him about the walls,  
 What care I though the earls begirt us round? **220**

*Enter* ISABELLA THE QUEEN, THREE LADIES (MARGARET  
 DE CLARE *with two* LADIES IN WAITING), GAVESTON,  
 BALDOCK, and SPENCER JUNIOR

Here comes she that's cause of all these jars.

188 lemans: sweethearts

Bannocks bourne: Edward was defeated at Bannockburn in 1314 having failed to secure nearby Stirling Castle from the Scots. Historically, Gaveston was dead by the time of this defeat

190 weeneth: hopes

192 rombelow: meaningless refrain rhyming with 'a heave and a ho' which derived from sea shanties

193 Wigmore shall fly: Wigmore Castle (in Herefordshire) shall be quickly sold

196 ensigns: banners raised in battle

200-1 cockerels/Affright a lion: lions (also symbols of royalty) were proverbially afraid of the crowing of the cock

220 begirt: surround, enclose

ISABELLA My lord, 'tis thought the earls are up in arms.

EDWARD Ay, and 'tis likewise thought you favour him.

ISABELLA Thus do you still suspect me without cause.

LADY MARGARET Sweet uncle, speak more kindly to the Queen.

GAVESTON (*Aside to* EDWARD) My lord, dissemble with her, speak her fair.

EDWARD Pardon me, sweet, I forgot myself.

ISABELLA Your pardon is quickly got of Isabel.

EDWARD The younger Mortimer is grown so brave

That to my face he threatens civil wars. **230**

GAVESTON Why do you not commit him to the Tower?

EDWARD I dare not, for the people love him well.

GAVESTON Why then, we'll have him privily made away.

EDWARD Would Lancaster and he had both caroused

A bowl of poison to each other's health.

But let them go, and tell me what are these?

*Indicates* BALDOCK and SPENCER JUNIOR

LADY MARGARET Two of my father's servants whilst he lived;

May't please your grace to entertain them now.

EDWARD Tell me, where wast thou born? What is thine arms?

BALDOCK My name is Baldock, and my gentry **240**  
 I fetched from Oxford, not from heraldry.

EDWARD The fitter art thou, Baldock, for my turn;

Wait on me, and I'll see thou shalt not want.

BALDOCK I humbly thank your majesty.

EDWARD Knowest thou him, Gaveston?

GAVESTON Ay, my lord.

His name is Spencer; he is well allied.

For my sake let him wait upon your grace;

Scarce shall you find a man of more desert.

EDWARD Then, Spencer, wait upon me; for his sake

I'll grace thee with a higher style ere long. **250**

SPENCER JUNIOR No greater titles happen unto me

Than to be favoured of your majesty.

EDWARD (*To* LADY MARGARET)

Cousin, this day shall be your marriage feast.

And, Gaveston, think that I love thee well

To wed thee to our niece, the only heir

223 him: i.e. Mortimer Junior

226 speak her fair: address her courteously

229 brave: defiant

233 privily made away: murdered

234 caroused: quaffed:

238 entertain: employ

241 Oxford, not from heraldry: Baldock claims his status through his Oxford education rather than through birth

246 well allied: of good birth

250 style: title

253 Cousin: niece (Edward's sister, Joan of Arc, had married the Earl of Gloucester)



Unto the Earl of Gloucester late deceased.  
 GAVESTON I know, my lord, many will stomach me,  
 But I respect neither their love nor hate.  
 EDWARD The headstrong barons shall not limit me;  
 He that I list to favour shall be great. 260  
 Come, let's away; and when the marriage ends,  
 Have at the rebels and their complices.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene iii

*Enter* LANCASTER, MORTIMER JUNIOR, WARWICK,  
 PEMBROKE, KENT

KENT My lords, of love to this our native land  
 I come to join with you and leave the King;  
 And in your quarrel and the realm's behoof  
 Will be the first that shall adventure life.  
 LANCASTER I fear me you are sent of policy  
 To undermine us with a show of love.  
 WARWICK He is your brother; therefore have we cause  
 To cast the worst and doubt of your revolt.  
 KENT Mine honour shall be hostage of my truth;  
 If that will not suffice, farewell, my lords. 10  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Stay, Edmund; never was  
 Plantagenet  
 False of his word, and therefore trust we thee.  
 PEMBROKE But what's the reason you should leave him  
 now?  
 KENT I have informed the Earl of Lancaster.  
 LANCASTER And it sufficeth. Now, my lords, know  
 this,  
 That Gaveston is secretly arrived,  
 And here in Tynemouth frolics with the King.  
 Let us with these our followers scale the walls,  
 And suddenly surprise them unawares.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR I'll give the onset.  
 WARWICK And I'll follow thee.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR This tattered ensign of my  
 ancestors, 21  
 Which swept the desert shore of that dead sea  
 Whereof we got the name of Mortimer,  
 Will I advance upon these castle walls.  
 Drums strike alarum. Raise them from their sport,  
 And ring aloud the knell of Gaveston. *Alarums*

257 stomach: resent

260 list: choose

4 adventure: risk

5 policy: as a trick

8 cast: consider

23 Mortimer: Mortimer Junior suggests that the family name derives from the Latin for the Dead Sea (*Mortum Mare*) because of having fought in the Crusades. In fact the name derived from Mortemer in Normandy

25 alarum: call to arms

LANCASTER None be so hardy as to touch the King  
 But neither spare you Gaveston nor his friends.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene iv

*Enter* EDWARD THE KING and SPENCER JUNIOR; *from separate doors to them* GAVESTON, *unseen by* EDWARD and SPENCER JUNIOR, *with* ISABELLA, LADY MARGARET DE CLARE, and attendants

EDWARD O tell me, Spencer, where is Gaveston?  
 SPENCER JUNIOR I fear me he is slain, my gracious lord.  
 EDWARD No, here he comes! Now let them spoil and  
 kill.  
 Fly, fly, my lords; the earls have got the hold.  
 Take shipping and away to Scarborough;  
 Spencer and I will post away by land.  
 GAVESTON O stay, my lord; they will not injure you.  
 EDWARD I will not trust them, Gaveston. Away!  
 GAVESTON Farewell, my lord.  
 EDWARD (*To* LADY MARGARET) Lady, farewell. 10  
 LADY MARGARET Farewell, sweet uncle, till we meet  
 again.  
 EDWARD Farewell, sweet Gaveston, and farewell, niece.  
 ISABELLA No farewell to poor Isabel, thy Queen?  
 EDWARD Yes, yes—for Mortimer, your lover's sake.  
*Exeunt all, except* ISABELLA  
 ISABELLA Heavens can witness, I love none but you.  
 From my embracements thus he breaks away;  
 O that mine arms could close this isle about,  
 That I might pull him to me where I would,  
 Or that these tears that drizzle from mine eyes  
 Had power to mollify his stony heart 20  
 That when I had him we might never part.

*Enter the* BARONS (LANCASTER, WARWICK, MORTIMER JUNIOR). *Alarums*

LANCASTER I wonder how he 'scaped?  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Who's this, the Queen?  
 ISABELLA Ay, Mortimer, the miserable Queen,  
 Whose pining heart, her inward sighs have blasted,  
 And body with continual mourning wasted.  
 These hands are tired with haling of my lord  
 From Gaveston, from wicked Gaveston,  
 And all in vain; for when I speak him fair,  
 He turns away and smiles upon his minion. 30  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Cease to lament, and tell us where's  
 the King?  
 ISABELLA What would you with the King? Is't him you  
 seek?

27 hardy: reckless

3 spoil: plunder

4 hold: fortress

6 post: go quickly (by horse)

LANCASTER No, madam, but that cursèd Gaveston.  
 Far be it from the thought of Lancaster  
 To offer violence to his sovereign.  
 We would but rid the realm of Gaveston;  
 Tell us where he remains, and he shall die.

ISABELLA He's gone by water unto Scarborough.  
 Pursue him quickly and he cannot 'scape;  
 The King hath left him, and his train is small. 40

WARWICK Forslow no time, sweet Lancaster; let's  
 march.

MORTIMER JUNIOR How comes it that the King and he  
 is parted?

ISABELLA That this your army, going several ways,  
 Might be of lesser force, and with the power  
 That he intendeth presently to raise  
 Be easily suppressed; and therefore be gone.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Here in the river rides a Flemish  
 hoy;  
 Let's all aboard and follow him amain.

LANCASTER The wind that bears him hence will fill our  
 sails.  
 Come, come aboard—'tis but an hour's sailing. 50

MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, stay you within this castle  
 here.

ISABELLA No, Mortimer, I'll to my lord the King.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Nay, rather sail with us to  
 Scarborough.

ISABELLA You know the King is so suspicious,  
 As if he hear I have but talked with you,  
 Mine honour will be called in question;  
 And therefore, gentle Mortimer, be gone.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, I cannot stay to answer  
 you;  
 But think of Mortimer as he deserves.

*Exeunt* LANCASTER, WARWICK, AND MORTIMER  
 JUNIOR

ISABELLA So well hast thou deserved, sweet Mortimer,  
 As Isabel could live with thee forever. 61  
 In vain I look for love at Edward's hand,  
 Whose eyes are fixed on none but Gaveston.  
 Yet once more I'll importune him with prayers;  
 If he be strange and not regard my words,  
 My son and I will over into France,  
 And to the King, my brother, there complain  
 How Gaveston hath robbed me of his love.  
 But yet I hope my sorrows will have end  
 And Gaveston this blessèd day be slain. 70

*Exit*

41 Forslow: waste  
 47 Flemish hoy: small Flemish fishing boat  
 48 amain: with all speed  
 60-1 So well . . . thee forever: 'Marlowe obviously prepares  
 the ground here for Isabella's adultery' (Forker)  
 65 strange: a) estranged: b) unresponsive

## Act II, scene v

*Enter* GAVESTON, *pursued*

GAVESTON Yet, lusty lords, I have escaped your hands,  
 Your threats, your 'larums, and your hot pursuits;  
 And though divorced from King Edward's eyes,  
 Yet liveth Piers of Gaveston unsurprised,  
 Breathing, in hope (*malgrado* all your beards  
 That muster rebels thus against your king)  
 To see his royal sovereign once again.

*Enter the* NOBLES (LANCASTER, WARWICK, PEMBROKE,  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR), SOLDIERS, JAMES, HORSE-BOY, AND  
 PEMBROKE'S MEN

WARWICK Upon him, soldiers! Take away his  
 weapons.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Thou proud disturber of thy  
 country's peace,  
 Corrupter of thy king, cause of these broils, 10  
 Base flatterer, yield! And were it not for shame—  
 Shame and dishonour to a soldier's name—  
 Upon my weapon's point here shouldst thou fall,  
 And welter in thy gore.

LANCASTER Monster of men,  
 That, like the Greekish strumpet, trained to arms  
 And bloody wars so many valiant knights,  
 Look for no other fortune, wretch, than death;  
 King Edward is not here to buckler thee.

WARWICK Lancaster, why talk'st thou to the slave?  
 Go, soldiers, take him hence; for by my sword, 20  
 His head shall off. Gaveston, short warning  
 Shall serve thy turn; it is our country's cause  
 That here severely we will execute  
 Upon thy person: hang him at a bough!

GAVESTON My lord—

WARWICK Soldiers, have him away.  
 But for thou wert the favourite of a king,  
 Thou shalt have so much honour at our hands.

*He gestures to indicate beheading*

GAVESTON I thank you all, my lords; then I perceive

1 lusty: insolent  
 5 *malgrado* all your beards: *malgrado* means 'in spite of'  
 (Italian); Gaveston may here be alluding to the long  
 beards of his English pursuers (as opposed to the clean-  
 shaven French)  
 10 broils: disturbances  
 15 Greekish strumpet: Helen of Troy, abducted by Paris  
 and thus the cause of the Trojan War  
 trained: lured  
 18 buckler: shield (i.e. protect)  
 21 warning: notice. Warwick considers Gaveston so  
 irredeemable that he should not be allowed to prepare  
 himself spiritually for death  
 27 But for: even though  
 28 so much honour: the nobility were exempt from hanging

That heading is one, and hanging is the other, 30  
And death is all.

*Enter the* EARL OF ARUNDEL

LANCASTER How now, my lord of Arundel?  
ARUNDEL My lords, King Edward greets you all by me.  
WARWICK Arundel, say your message.  
ARUNDEL His majesty,  
Hearing that you had taken Gaveston,  
Entreateth you by me, that but he may  
See him before he dies; for why, he says,  
And sends you word, he knows that die he shall;  
And if you gratify his grace so far,  
He will be mindful of the courtesy. 40

WARWICK How now?  
GAVESTON Renowned Edward, how thy name  
Revives poor Gaveston.  
WARWICK No, it needeth not.  
Arundel, we will gratify the King  
In other matters; he must pardon us in this.  
Soldiers, away with him.  
GAVESTON Why, my lord of Warwick,  
Will not these delays beget my hopes?  
I know it, lords, it is this life you aim at;  
Yet grant King Edward this.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Shalt thou appoint  
What we shall grant? Soldiers, away with him! 50  
(*To* ARUNDEL) Thus we'll gratify the King:  
We'll send his head by thee; let him bestow  
His tears on that, for that is all he gets  
Of Gaveston, or else his senseless trunk.  
LANCASTER Not so, my lord, lest he bestow more cost  
In burying him than he hath ever earned.  
ARUNDEL My lords, it is his majesty's request,  
And in the honour of a king he swears  
He will but talk with him and send him back.  
WARWICK When, can you tell? Arundel, no; we wot 60  
He that the care of realm remits,  
And drives his nobles to these exigents  
For Gaveston, will, if he seize him once,  
Violate any promise to possess him.  
ARUNDEL Then if you will not trust his grace in keep,  
My lords, I will be pledge for his return.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR It is honourable in thee to offer  
this,  
But for we know thou art a noble gentleman,

We will not wrong thee so,  
To make away a true man for a thief. 70  
GAVESTON How meanst thou, Mortimer? That is over-  
base!  
MORTIMER JUNIOR Away, base groom, robber of kings'  
renown;  
Question with thy companions and thy mates.  
PEMBROKE My lord Mortimer, and you my lords each  
one,  
To gratify the King's request therein,  
Touching the sending of this Gaveston,  
Because his majesty so earnestly  
Desires to see the man before his death,  
I will upon mine honour undertake  
To carry him and bring him back again, 80  
Provided this, that you, my lord of Arundel  
Will join with me.  
WARWICK Pembroke, what wilt thou do?  
Cause yet more bloodshed? Is it not enough  
That we have taken him, but must we now  
Leave him on 'had I wist' and let him go?  
PEMBROKE My lords, I will not over-woo your  
honours,  
But if you dare trust Pembroke with the prisoner,  
Upon mine oath I will return him back.  
ARUNDEL My lord of Lancaster, what say you in this?  
LANCASTER Why, I say, let him go on Pembroke's word.  
PEMBROKE And you, lord Mortimer? 91  
MORTIMER JUNIOR How say you, my lord of Warwick?  
WARWICK Nay, do your pleasures; I know how 'twill  
prove.  
PEMBROKE Then give him me.  
GAVESTON Sweet sovereign, yet I come  
To see thee ere I die.  
WARWICK (*Aside*) Yet not perhaps,  
If Warwick's wit and policy prevail.  
MORTIMER JUNIOR My lord of Pembroke, we deliver  
him you;  
Return him on your honour. Sound away!  
*Trumpets sound. Exeunt all but* PEMBROKE, ARUNDEL,  
GAVESTON *and* PEMBROKE'S MEN, FOUR SOLDIERS, *with*  
JAMES, *and* HORSE-BOY  
PEMBROKE (*To* ARUNDEL) My lord, you shall go with  
me;  
My house is not far hence—out of the way 100  
A little—but our men shall go along.  
We that have pretty wenches to our wives,  
Sir, must not come so near and balk their lips.

30 heading: beheading

37 for why: because

40 be mindful of: take into consideration

60 wot: know

61 remits: abandons

62 exigents: exigencies, severe measures

seize: take possession of

in keep: in custody

66 be pledge: stake my own life (as security)

70 make away: murder

73 Question: argue

85 'had I wist': 'had I known' (proverbial)

93 do your pleasures: do as you will

96 wit and policy: cunning and strategy

103 balk: neglect

ARUNDEL 'Tis very kindly spoke, my lord of Pembroke;  
Your honour hath an adamant of power  
To draw a prince.

PEMBROKE So my lord. Come hither, James.  
I do commit this Gaveston to thee;  
Be thou this night his keeper. In the morning  
We will discharge thee of thy charge; be gone. 109

GAVESTON Unhappy Gaveston, whither goest thou now?  
*Exit GAVESTON, with PEMBROKE'S MEN and JAMES  
HORSE-BOY* My lord, we'll quickly be at Cobham.

*Exeunt PEMBROKE and ARUNDEL, with the  
HORSE-BOY and SOLDIERS*

## Act II, scene vi

*Enter GAVESTON mourning, with JAMES and the EARL OF  
PEMBROKE'S MEN*

GAVESTON O treacherous Warwick, thus to wrong thy  
friend!

JAMES I see it is your life these arms pursue.

GAVESTON Weaponless must I fall and die in bands.  
O, must this day be period of my life,  
Centre of all my bliss? An ye be men,  
Speed to the King.

*Enter WARWICK and his company*

WARWICK My lord of Pembroke's men,  
Strive you no longer; I will have that Gaveston.

JAMES Your lordship doth dishonour to yourself  
And wrong our lord, your honourable friend.

WARWICK No, James, it is my country's cause I follow. 10  
Go, take the villain; soldiers, come away,  
We'll make quick work. Commend me to your  
master,

My friend, and tell him that I watched it well.  
(*To GAVESTON*) Come, let thy shadow parley with  
King Edward.

GAVESTON Treacherous Earl, shall I not see the King?

WARWICK The King of Heaven perhaps, no other king.  
Away!

105 adamant: magnet, loadstone

109 discharge: relieve

111 Cobham: there is a Cobham in Kent and another in  
Surrey. Neither makes sense since Pembroke's house was  
at Deddington in Oxfordshire

1 thy friend: i.e. Pembroke

2 arms: i.e. soldiers

3 bands: bonds

4 period: the end

5 Centre of all my bliss: a) nadir, the low point; b) the day  
of reunion with Edward

An: if

7 Strive you: struggle

13 watched it: guarded (Gaveston)

14 shadow: ghost

*Exeunt WARWICK and his men, with GAVESTON. JAMES  
remains with the others*

JAMES Come fellows, it booteth not for us to strive.  
We will in haste go certify our lord.

*Exeunt*

## Act III, scene i

*Enter KING EDWARD and Spencer JUNIOR, AND BALDOCK,  
with drums and fifes*

EDWARD I long to hear an answer from the barons  
Touching my friend, my dearest Gaveston.  
Ah, Spencer, not the riches of my realm  
Can ransom him; ah, he is marked to die.  
I know the malice of the younger Mortimer;  
Warwick, I know, is rough, and Lancaster  
Inexorable; and I shall never see  
My lovely Piers, my Gaveston, again.  
The barons overbear me with their pride.

SPENCER JUNIOR Were I King Edward, England's  
sovereign,

10

Son to the lovely Eleanor of Spain,  
Great Edward Longshanks' issue, would I bear  
These braves, this rage, and suffer uncontrolled  
These barons thus to beard me in my land,  
In mine own realm? My lord, pardon my speech.  
Did you retain your father's magnanimity,  
Did you regard the honour of your name,  
You would not suffer thus your majesty  
Be counterbuffed of your nobility.  
Strike off their heads, and let them preach on poles;  
No doubt such lessons they will teach the rest, 21  
As by their preachments they will profit much  
And learn obedience to their lawful king.

EDWARD Yea, gentle Spencer, we have been too mild,  
Too kind to them, but now have drawn our sword,  
And if they send me not my Gaveston,  
We'll steel it on their crest and poll their tops.

BALDOCK This haught resolve becomes your majesty,

18 booteth not: was useless

19 certify: inform

11 Eleanor of Spain: Eleanor of Castile, Edward I's first wife

12 Longshanks: Edward I acquired this name because of his  
long legs

13 braves: insults

14 beard: defy (as in 'pluck by the beard')

16 magnanimity: courage (associated with nobility)

19 counterbuffed of: opposed by

20 preach on poles: see I.i.118n

22 preachments: exhortations

27 steel it: sharpen (his sword)

poll their tops: cut off their heads (referring to the  
pollarding of tree-tops and punning on Spencer Junior's  
'poles')

28 haught: lofty

- Not to be tied to their affection  
As though your highness were a schoolboy still, 30  
And must be awed and governed like a child.
- Enter HUGH SPENCER SENIOR, an old man, father to the young SPENCER JUNIOR, with his truncheon, and soldiers*
- SPENCER SENIOR Long live my sovereign, the noble Edward,  
In peace triumphant, fortunate in wars.  
EDWARD Welcome, old man. Com'st thou in Edward's aid?  
Then tell thy prince of whence and what thou art.  
SPENCER SENIOR Lo, with a band of bowmen and of pikes,  
Brown bills and targeteers, four hundred strong,  
Sworn to defend King Edward's royal right,  
I come in person to your majesty:  
Spencer, the father of Hugh Spencer there, 40  
Bound to your highness everlastingly  
For favours done in him unto us all.  
EDWARD Thy father, Spencer?  
SPENCER JUNIOR True, an it like your grace,  
That pours in lieu of all your goodness shown,  
His life, my lord, before your princely feet.  
EDWARD Welcome ten thousand times, old man,  
again.  
Spencer, this love, this kindness to thy king  
Argues thy noble mind and disposition.  
Spencer, I here create thee Earl of Wiltshire,  
And daily will enrich thee with our favour 50  
That, as the sunshine, shall reflect o'er thee.  
Beside, the more to manifest our love,  
Because we hear Lord Bruce doth sell his land  
And that the Mortimers are in hand withal,  
Thou shalt have crowns of us, t'outbid the barons;  
And Spencer, spare them not, but lay it on.  
Soldiers, a largess, and thrice welcome all.
- 
- 29 affection: support, desires  
31 awed: frightened  
3D *truncheon*: staff, symbol of authority (and of war)  
35 of whence and what thou art: 'where you come from and what is your name'  
36 bowmen and of pikes: lines of bowmen (archers) were protected in the field by lines of sharpened lances (pikes) driven by their bearers into the ground ahead  
36 Brown bills: footsoldiers with bronzed halberds (metonymic)  
targeteers: shield-carrying footsoldiers  
43 an it like: if it please  
48 Argues: proves; 'Ironically, this statement emphasises the fact that Spencer Senior is not, by birth, a nobleman' (Wiggins and Lindsey)  
54 in hand withal: i.e. engaged with this transaction  
56 spare them . . . it on: do not be frugal (with the crowns) but be extravagant (in your counter-offer)  
57 largess: bounty
- Enter ISABELLA THE QUEEN and PRINCE EDWARD her son, and LEVUNE, a Frenchman*
- SPENCER JUNIOR My lord, here comes the Queen.  
EDWARD Madam, what news?  
ISABELLA News of dishonour, lord, and discontent:  
Our friend Levune, faithful and full of trust, 60  
Informeth us by letters and by words  
That Lord Valois our brother, King of France,  
Because your highness hath been slack in homage,  
Hath seizèd Normandy into his hands.  
These be the letters, this the messenger.  
EDWARD Welcome Levune. (*To ISABELLA*) Tush, Sib,  
if this be all,  
Valois and I will soon be friends again.  
But to my Gaveston—shall I never see,  
Never behold thee now? Madam, in this matter  
We will employ you and your little son; 70  
You shall go parley with the King of France.  
Boy, see you bear you bravely to the King  
And do your message with a majesty.  
PRINCE EDWARD Commit not to my youth things of  
more weight  
Than fits a prince so young as I to bear.  
And fear not, lord and father; heaven's great beams  
On Atlas' shoulder shall not lie more safe  
Than shall your charge committed to my trust.  
ISABELLA Ah, boy, this towardness makes thy mother  
fear  
Thou art not marked to many days on earth. 80  
EDWARD Madam, we will that you with speed be  
shipped,  
And this our son. Levune shall follow you  
With all the haste we can dispatch him hence.  
Choose of our lords to bear you company,  
And go in peace; leave us in wars at home.  
ISABELLA Unnatural wars, where subjects brave their  
king:  
God end them once. My lord, I take my leave  
To make my preparation for France.  
*Exeunt ISABELLA and PRINCE EDWARD*
- Enter LORD ARUNDEL*
- EDWARD What, Lord Arundel, dost thou come alone?  
ARUNDEL Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead. 90  
EDWARD Ah, traitors, have they put my friend to  
death?
- 
- 66 Sib: sibling, or an 'affectionate diminutive of Isabella' (Gill)  
77 Atlas' shoulder: in classical mythology Atlas supported the sky on his shoulder  
79 towardness: boldness  
80 many days on earth: for Marlowe's audience this would be ironic, since Edward III actually reigned from 1327–77  
87 once: once and for all

Tell me, Arundel, died he ere thou cam'st,  
Or didst thou see my friend to take his death?  
ARUNDEL Neither, my lord, for as he was surprised,  
Begirt with weapons and with enemies round,  
I did your highness' message to them all,  
Demanding him of them—entreating rather—  
And said, upon the honour of my name,  
That I would undertake to carry him  
Unto your highness, and to bring him back. 100

EDWARD And tell me, would the rebels deny me that?  
SPENCER JUNIOR Proud recreants!  
EDWARD Yea, Spencer, traitors all.  
ARUNDEL I found them at the first inexorable;  
The Earl of Warwick would not bide the hearing,  
Mortimer hardly; Pembroke and Lancaster  
Spake least. And when they flatly had denied,  
Refusing to receive me pledge for him,  
The Earl of Pembroke mildly thus bespake:  
'My lords, because our sovereign sends for him  
And promiseth he shall be safe returned,  
I will this undertake: to have him hence 110  
And see him re-delivered to your hands.'

EDWARD Well, and how fortunes that he came not?  
SPENCER JUNIOR Some treason or some villainy was  
cause.  
ARUNDEL The Earl of Warwick seized him on his way,  
For, being delivered unto Pembroke's men,  
Their lord rode home, thinking his prisoner safe;  
But ere he came, Warwick in ambush lay,  
And bare him to his death, and in a trench  
Struck off his head, and marched unto the camp. 120

SPENCER JUNIOR A bloody part, flatly against law of  
arms.  
EDWARD O, shall I speak, or shall I sigh and die?  
SPENCER JUNIOR My lord, refer your vengeance to the  
sword  
Upon these barons; hearten up your men.  
Let them not unrevenge murder your friends.  
Advance your standard, Edward, in the field,  
And march to fire them from their starting holes.  
EDWARD (*Kneeling*) By earth, the common mother of  
us all,  
By heaven and all the moving orbs thereof,  
By this right hand and by my father's sword, 130  
And all the honours 'longing to my crown,  
I will have heads and lives for him as many

As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers. *Rises*  
Traacherous Warwick! Traitorous Mortimer!  
If I be England's king, in lakes of gore  
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,  
That you may drink your fill and quaff in blood,  
And stain my royal standard with the same,  
That so my bloody colours may suggest  
Remembrance of revenge immortally 140  
On your accursed traitorous progeny—  
You villains that have slain my Gaveston.  
And in this place of honour and of trust,  
Spencer, sweet Spencer, I adopt thee here;  
And merely of our love we do create thee  
Earl of Gloucester and Lord Chamberlain,  
Despite of times, despite of enemies.

SPENCER JUNIOR My lord, here is a messenger from the  
barons  
Desires access unto your majesty.  
EDWARD Admit him near. 150

*Enter the HERALD from the BARONS, with his coat of  
arms*  
HERALD Long live King Edward, England's lawful lord.  
EDWARD So wish not they, iwis, that sent thee hither.  
Thou com'st from Mortimer and his complices—  
A ranker rout of rebels never was.  
Well, say thy message.  
HERALD The barons up in arms, by me salute  
Your highness with long life and happiness,  
And bid me say as plainer to your grace,  
That if without effusion of blood  
You will this grief have ease and remedy, 160  
That from your princely person you remove  
(*Indicating SPENCER JUNIOR*) This Spencer, as a  
putrefying branch  
That deads the royal vine whose golden leaves  
Impale your princely head, your diadem,  
Whose brightness such pernicious upstarts dim,  
Say they; and lovingly advise your grace  
To cherish virtue and nobility,  
And have old servitors in high esteem,

94 surprised: ambushed

102 recreants: breakers of loyalty

104 bide: abide

113 fortunes: does it happen

121 part: act

123 refer: assign

127 fire them from their starting holes: smoke them from  
their hiding places (metaphor from hunting)

129 moving orbs: heavenly bodies thought to circle the earth

145 merely: by command rather than by succession. 'The  
word suggests that Edward's motive for honouring  
Spencer Junior is personal attraction, not an aspect of his  
vengeance upon the murderers of Gaveston' (Forster)152 iwis: assuredly (from the Middle English *ywis*)

154 rout: band

158 plainer: complainant

163 deads: deadens, kills

the royal vine: anachronistic, since it was the crowns of  
later monarchs that were decorated with vines (Edward's  
had strawberry leaves)

164 Impale: encircle

diadem: crown

168 old servitors: long-standing supporters

And shake off smooth dissembling flatterers.  
 This granted, they, their honours, and their lives 170  
 Are to your highness vowed and consecrate.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Ah, traitors, will they still display  
 their pride?  
 EDWARD Away! Tarry no answer, but be gone.  
 Rebels! Will they appoint their sovereign  
 His sports, his pleasures, and his company?  
 Yet ere thou go, see how I do divorce  
 Spencer from me. *Embraces* SPENCER JUNIOR  
 Now get thee to thy lords,  
 And tell them I will come to chastise them  
 For murdering Gaveston. Hie thee, get thee gone;  
 Edward with fire and sword follows at thy heels. 180  
*Exit* HERALD  
 My lords, perceive you how these rebels swell?  
 Soldiers, good hearts, defend your sovereign's right,  
 For now, even now, we march to make them stoop.  
 Away!

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene ii

*Alarums, excursions, a great fight, and a retreat. Enter*  
 EDWARD THE KING, SPENCER SENIOR, SPENCER JUNIOR,  
 and the NOBLEMEN *of the King's side*

EDWARD Why do we sound retreat? Upon them, lords!  
 This day I shall pour vengeance with my sword  
 On those proud rebels that are up in arms,  
 And do confront and countermand their king.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR I doubt it not, my lord; right will  
 prevail.  
 SPENCER SENIOR 'Tis not amiss, my liege, for either part  
 To breathe a while; our men with sweat and dust  
 All choked well near, begin to faint for heat,  
 And this retire refresheth horse and man.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Here come the rebels. 10

*Enter the* BARONS, MORTIMER JUNIOR, LANCASTER,  
 KENT, WARWICK, PEMBROKE *with the others*

MORTIMER JUNIOR Look, Lancaster,  
 Yonder is Edward among his flatterers.  
 LANCASTER And there let him be,  
 Till he pay dearly for their company.  
 WARWICK And shall, or Warwick's sword shall smite in  
 vain.  
 EDWARD What, rebels, do you shrink and sound retreat?

171 consecrate: made sacred

173 Tarry: await

174 appoint: grant, allow

183 make them stoop: humiliate them

SD *excursions*: groups of soldiers rush across the stage as in  
battle

9 retire: pause, temporary retreat

MORTIMER JUNIOR No, Edward, no; thy flatterers faint  
 and fly.

LANCASTER Thou'd best betimes forsake thee and their  
 trains,

For they'll betray thee, traitors as they are.

SPENCER JUNIOR Traitor on thy face, rebellious  
 Lancaster. 20

PEMBROKE Away, base upstart; brav'st thou nobles thus?

SPENCER SENIOR A noble attempt and honourable deed

Is it not, trow ye, to assemble aid

And levy arms against your lawful king?

EDWARD For which ere long their heads shall satisfy

T'appease the wrath of their offended king.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Then, Edward, thou wilt fight it to  
 the last,

And rather bathe thy sword in subjects' blood

Than banish that pernicious company?

EDWARD Ay, traitors all! Rather than thus be braved,  
 Make England's civil towns huge heaps of stones 31

And ploughs to go about our palace gates.

WARWICK A desperate and unnatural resolution.

Alarum to the fight!

Saint George for England and the barons' right!

EDWARD Saint George for England and King Edward's  
 right!

*Exeunt severally. Alarums*

*Enter* EDWARD, SPENCER SENIOR, SPENCER JUNIOR,  
 BALDOCK, LEVUNE, and SOLDIERS *with the* BARONS  
 KENT, WARWICK, LANCASTER, and MORTIMER JUNIOR  
*captives*

EDWARD Now, lusty lords, now not by chance of war  
 But justice of the quarrel and the cause,  
 Vailed is your pride. Methinks you hang the heads,  
 But we'll advance them, traitors! Now 'tis time 40

To be avenged on you for all your braves

And for the murder of my dearest friend,

To whom right well you knew our soul was knit:

Good Piers of Gaveston, my sweet favourite—

Ah rebels, recreants, you made him away!

KENT Brother, in regard of thee and of thy land,

Did they remove that flatterer from thy throne.

EDWARD So, sir, you have spoke; away, avoid our  
 presence. *Exit* KENT

Accursèd wretches, was't in regard of us,

When we had sent our messenger to request 50

He might be spared to come to speak with us,

And Pembroke undertook for his return,

18 Thou'd: thou had

23 trow ye: think you

35 Saint George: Patron Saint of England (in fact not  
adopted as such until the reign of Edward III)

39 Vailed: lowered

40 advance: raise the victims' heads on pikes (like standards)

48 avoid: depart

That thou, proud Warwick, watched the prisoner,  
 Poor Piers, and headed him against law of arms?  
 For which thy head shall overlook the rest  
 As much as thou in rage outwent'st the rest.  
 WARWICK Tyrant, I scorn thy threats and menaces;  
 'Tis but temporal that thou canst inflict.  
 LANCASTER The worst is death, and better die to live,  
 Than live in infamy under such a king. 60  
 EDWARD Away with them, my lord of Winchester,  
 These lusty leaders, Warwick and Lancaster.  
 I charge you roundly off with both their heads.  
 Away!

WARWICK Farewell, vain world.

LANCASTER Sweet Mortimer, farewell.  
*Exeunt WARWICK and LANCASTER, guarded with*  
 SPENCER SENIOR

MORTIMER JUNIOR England, unkind to thy nobility,  
 Groan for this grief; behold how thou art maimed.  
 EDWARD Go take that haughty Mortimer to the Tower;  
 There see him safe bestowed. And for the rest,  
 Do speedy execution on them all.  
 Begone! 70

MORTIMER JUNIOR What, Mortimer! Can ragged stony  
 walls  
 Immure thy virtue that aspires to heaven?  
 No, Edward, England's scourge, it may not be;  
 Mortimer's hope surmounts his fortune far.

*Exit MORTIMER JUNIOR under guard*

EDWARD Sound drums and trumpets! March with me  
 my friends  
 Edward this day hath crowned him king anew.

*Exit, attended. SPENCER JUNIOR, LEVUNE and*  
 BALDOCK *remain*

SPENCER JUNIOR Levune, the trust that we repose in thee  
 Begets the quiet of King Edward's land.  
 Therefore be gone in haste, and with advice  
 Bestow that treasure on the lords of France; 80  
 That therewithal enchanted, like the guard  
 That suffered Jove to pass in showers of gold  
 To Danaë, all aid may be denied  
 To Isabel the Queen, that now in France  
 Makes friends, to cross the seas with her young son,  
 And step into his father's regiment.

LEVUNE That's it these barons and the subtle Queen  
 Long levelled at.

BALDOCK Yea, but Levune, thou seest

54 headed: beheaded

55 overlook: 'be mounted on a higher pole than'

58 temporal: earthly suffering (rather than spiritual)

61 my lord of Winchester: i.e. Spencer Senior

71 ragged: rugged

72 Immure: enclose (within walls)

83 To Danaë: see II.ii.53n

86 regiment: authority

88 levelled: aimed (as in shooting)

These barons lay their heads on blocks together;  
 What they intend, the hangman frustrates clean. 90  
 LEVUNE Have you no doubts, my lords; I'll clap 's close  
 Among the lords of France with England's gold  
 That Isabel shall make her plaints in vain,  
 And France shall be obdurate with her tears.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Then make for France amain;  
 Levune, away!  
 Proclaim King Edward's wars and victories.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene i

*Enter EDMUND the EARL OF KENT*

EDMUND Fair blows the wind for France; blow, gentle  
 gale,  
 Till Edmund be arrived for England's good.  
 Nature, yield to my country's cause in this:  
 A brother—no, a butcher of thy friends—  
 Proud Edward, dost thou banish me thy presence?  
 But I'll to France, and cheer the wrongèd Queen,  
 And certify what Edward's looseness is.  
 Unnatural king, to slaughter noblemen  
 And cherish flatterers. Mortimer, I stay  
 Thy sweet escape; stand gracious, gloomy night 10  
 To his device.

*Enter MORTIMER JUNIOR disguised*

MORTIMER JUNIOR Holla! Who walketh there? Is't you  
 my lord?

KENT Mortimer, 'tis I;  
 But hath thy potion wrought so happily?

MORTIMER JUNIOR It hath, my lord; the warders all  
 asleep,

I thank them, gave me leave to pass in peace.  
 But hath your grace got shipping unto France?

KENT Fear it not.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene ii

*Enter ISABELLA THE QUEEN and her son PRINCE*

EDWARD

ISABELLA Ah boy, our friends do fail us all in France;  
 The lords are cruel and the King unkind.

90 clean: absolutely

91 clap 's: clap us; seal a bargain (as with a clap of the hands)  
 close: secretly

7 looseness: a) incompetence; b) sexual misconduct

9 stay: await

10 gracious: in grace. Kent calls upon the darkness of night  
 to aid Mortimer Junior's escape

11 device: plan, intent

14 thy potion . . . so happily?: 'has your drug worked so well?'



What shall we do?  
 PRINCE EDWARD Madam, return to England  
 And please my father well, and then a fig  
 For all my uncle's friendship here in France.  
 I warrant you, I'll win his highness quickly;  
 'A loves me better than a thousand Spencers.  
 ISABELLA Ah boy, thou art deceived at least in this,  
 To think that we can yet be tuned together.  
 No, no, we jar too far. Unkind Valois!  
 Unhappy Isabel! When France rejects,  
 Whither, O whither dost thou bend thy steps?

*Enter* SIR JOHN OF HAINAULT

SIR JOHN Madam, what cheer?  
 ISABELLA Ah, good Sir John of Hainault,  
 Never so cheerless, nor so far distressed.  
 SIR JOHN I hear, sweet lady, of the King's unkindness.  
 But droop not, madam; noble minds contemn  
 Despair. Will your grace with me to Hainault  
 And there stay time's advantage with your son?  
 How say you, my lord, will you go with your friends,  
 And shake off all our fortunes equally? 20  
 PRINCE EDWARD So pleaseth the Queen, my mother,  
 me it likes.  
 The King of England nor the court of France  
 Shall have me from my gracious mother's side,  
 Till I be strong enough to break a staff,  
 And then have at the proudest Spencer's head.  
 SIR JOHN Well said, my lord.  
 ISABELLA Oh, my sweet heart, how do I moan thy  
 wrongs,  
 Yet triumph in the hope of thee, my joy.  
 Ah, sweet Sir John, even to the utmost verge  
 Of Europe, or the shore of Tanais,  
 Will we with thee to Hainault, so we will. 30

4 a fig: obscene expression of contempt (where a thumb is thrust through two fingers)

6 warrant: assure

7 'A: he

10 jar: become discordant (as in music)

12 Whither does . . . thy steps?: i.e. 'what is my next course of action?'

16 contemn: despise

17 Hainault: Flemish county in the Low Countries, bordering France

20 shake off: cast off (our shared hopes of French support)

23 have me: move me

24 a staff: lance (to be broken in battle)

25 have at: attack

27 moan: lament

29 utmost verge: the furthest limit

30 Tanais: the Latin name for the River Don which Elizabethans thought of as the border between Europe and Asia

The Marquis is a noble gentleman;  
 His grace, I dare presume, will welcome me.

*Enter* EDMUND *the* EARL OF KENT *and* MORTIMER JUNIOR

But who are these?

KENT Madam, long may you live  
 Much happier than your friends in England do.  
 ISABELLA Lord Edmund and Lord Mortimer alive!  
 Welcome to France. The news was here, my lord,  
 That you were dead, or very near your death.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Lady, the last was truest of the  
 twain;  
 But Mortimer, reserved for better hap, 40  
 Hath shaken off the thraldom of the Tower,  
 (*To* PRINCE EDWARD) And lives t'advance your  
 standard, good my lord.  
 PRINCE EDWARD How mean you, an the King my  
 father lives?  
 No, my lord Mortimer, not I, I trow.  
 ISABELLA Not, son? Why not? I would it were no  
 worse;  
 But gentle lords, friendless we are in France.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Monsieur le Grand, a noble friend  
 of yours,  
 Told us at our arrival all the news:  
 How hard the nobles, how unkind the King  
 Hath showed himself. But madam, right makes room  
 Where weapons want; and though a many friends 51  
 Are made away—as Warwick, Lancaster,  
 And others of our party and faction—  
 Yet have we friends, assure your grace, in England  
 Would cast up caps and clap their hands for joy,  
 To see us there appointed for our foes.  
 KENT Would all were well and Edward well reclaimed,  
 For England's honour, peace, and quietness.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR But by the sword, my lord, it must  
 be deserved.  
 The King will ne'er forsake his flatterers. 60  
 SIR JOHN My lords of England, sith the ungentle King

32 Marquis: i.e. Sir John's brother, William, Count of Hainault

41 thraldom: bondage

44 trow: reckon, think

47 Monsieur le Grand: an invented figure with no historical origin

49 hard: obdurate:

the King: i.e. of France

50 makes room: makes way

51 want: are lacking  
 a many: many (for emphasis)

52 made away: killed

56 appointed: armed

57 reclaimed: a) subdued; b) taken back

61 sith: since

Of France refuseth to give aid of arms  
 To this distressèd queen his sister here,  
 Go you with her to Hainault. Doubt ye not,  
 We will find comfort, money, men, and friends  
 Ere long, to bid the English King a base.  
 How say, young prince, what think you of the match?  
 PRINCE EDWARD I think King Edward will outrun us  
 all.

ISABELLA Nay son, not so; and you must not  
 discourage  
 Your friends that are so forward in your aid. 70

KENT Sir John of Hainault, pardon us, I pray;  
 These comforts that you give our woeful Queen  
 Bind us in kindness all at your command.

ISABELLA Yea, gentle brother; and the God of heaven  
 Prosper your happy motion, good Sir John.

MORTIMER JUNIOR This noble gentleman, forward in  
 arms,  
 Was born, I see, to be our anchor-hold.  
 Sir John of Hainault, be it thy renown  
 That England's Queen and nobles in distress  
 Have been by thee restored and comforted. 80

SIR JOHN Madam, along, and you, my lord, with me,  
 That England's peers may Hainault's welcome see.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene iii

*Enter EDWARD THE KING, ARUNDEL, the two SPENCERS,  
 SENIOR and JUNIOR, with others*

EDWARD Thus after many threats of wrathful war,  
 Triumpheth England's Edward with his friends;  
 And triumph Edward with his friends uncontrolled.  
 (*To SPENCER JUNIOR*) My lord of Gloucester, do you  
 hear the news?

SPENCER JUNIOR What news, my lord?

EDWARD Why man, they say there is great execution  
 Done through the realm. My lord of Arundel,  
 You have the note, have you not?

ARUNDEL From the Lieutenant of the Tower, my lord.

EDWARD I pray let us see it. What have we there? 10  
 Read it Spencer.

66 bid the . . . a base: a challenge to an opponent to risk  
 becoming a prisoner (from a children's game)

67 match: game

74 brother: i.e. brother-in-law

75 motion: proposal

76 forward: ardent

3 uncontrolled: without censure

8 note: official notification of the dead

11 Read it Spencer: Marlowe's text does not include the list  
 of names. We follow other editors by inserting the list  
 from *Holinsbed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and  
 Ireland*, 2nd edition (1587)

SPENCER JUNIOR (*Reads their names*) [The Lord  
 William Tuchet, the Lord William Fitzwilliam, the  
 Lord Warren de Lisle, the Lord Henry Bradborne,  
 and the Lord William Chenie barons, with John  
 Page, an esquire, were drawn and hanged at Pomfret  
 [ . . . ] and then shortly after, Roger Lord Clifford,  
 John Lord Mowbray, and Sir Gosein D'Eivill,  
 barons, were drawn and hanged at York. At Bristol in  
 like manner were executed Sir Henry de Willington  
 and Sir Henry Montfort, baronets; and at Gloucester,  
 the Lord John Gifford and Sir William Elmebridge,  
 knights; and at London, the Lord Henry Tyes,  
 baron; at Winchelsea, Sir Thomas Culpepper,  
 knight: at Windsor, the Lord Francis de Aldham,  
 baron; and at Canterbury, the Lord Bartholomew de  
 Badlesmere and the Lord Bartholomew de  
 Ashburnham, barons. Also, at Cardiff in Wales, Sir  
 William Fleming, knight, was executed. Divers were  
 executed in their counties, as Sir Thomas Mandit  
 and others.]

EDWARD Why so, they 'barked apace a month ago;  
 Now, on my life, they'll neither bark nor bite.  
 Now, sirs, the news from France; Gloucester, I trow  
 The lords of France love England's gold so well  
 As Isabella gets no aid from thence.  
 What now remains? Have you proclaimed, my lord,  
 Reward for them can bring in Mortimer?

SPENCER JUNIOR My lord, we have; and if he be in  
 England,  
 A will be had ere long, I doubt it not. 20

EDWARD If, dost thou say? Spencer, as true as death,  
 He is in England's ground; our port masters  
 Are not so careless of their king's command.

*Enter a POST with letters*

How now, what news with thee? From whence come  
 these?

POST Letters, my lord, and tidings forth of France  
 To you, my lord of Gloucester, from Levune.

EDWARD Read. 27

SPENCER JUNIOR (*Reads the letter*) 'My duty to your  
 honour premised, *etcetera*, I have according to  
 instructions in that behalf, dealt with the King of  
 France's lords, and effected that the Queen, all  
 discontented and discomfited, is gone. Whither? If  
 you ask, with Sir John of Hainault, brother to the  
 Marquis, into Flanders. With them are gone Lord  
 Edmund and the Lord Mortimer, having in their

12 'barked: embarked (on their treason)

apace: swiftly

15 love England's gold: Edward's bribe has worked

20 A will be had: he will be captured

28-9 'My duty . . . honour premised': formal opening for a  
 report

31 effected: brought about

company divers of your nation, and others; and, as constant report goeth, they intend to give King Edward battle in England sooner than he can look for them. This is all the news of import.

Your honour's in all service, Levune.'

EDWARD Ah, villains, hath that Mortimer escaped? 41  
With him is Edmund gone associate?  
And will Sir John of Hainault lead the round?  
Welcome, i' God's name, madam, and your son;  
England shall welcome you and all your rout.  
Gallop apace bright Phoebus through the sky,  
And dusky night, in rusty iron car,  
Between you both shorten the time, I pray,  
That I may see that most desired day  
When we may meet these traitors in the field. 50  
Ah, nothing grieves me but my little boy  
Is thus misled to countenance their ills,  
Come, friends, to Bristol, there to make us strong;  
And, winds, as equal be to bring them in  
As you injurious were to bear them forth.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene iv

*Enter ISABELLA THE QUEEN, her son PRINCE EDWARD, EDMUND the EARL OF KENT, MORTIMER JUNIOR, and SIR JOHN OF HAINAULT, with soldiers*

ISABELLA Now lords, our loving friends and countrymen,  
Welcome to England all. With prosperous winds  
Our kindest friends in Belgia have we left,  
To cope with friends at home. A heavy case,  
When force to force is knit, and sword and glaive  
In civil broils makes kin and countrymen  
Slaughter themselves in others, and their sides  
With their own weapons gored. But what's the help?  
Misgoverned kings are cause of all this wrack;  
And Edward, thou art one among them all, 10  
Whose looseness hath betrayed thy land to spoil  
And made the channels overflow with blood.

37 constant: consistent, reliable

43 lead the round: lead the dance (the next stage)

46 Phoebus: Apollo, the classical god of the sun, who drove the sun across the sky in a chariot

52 countenance their ills: support their crimes

2 prosperous: favourable

3 Belgia: the Low Countries

4 cope: engage in battle  
friends: kinsfolk, relatives  
heavy case: sad state of affairs

5 glaive: 'lance, but in the sixteenth century the word came also to mean "bill" and "sword" (Forker)

8 help: remedy

9 Misgoverned: unruly  
wrack: destruction

Of thine own people patron shouldst thou be,  
But thou—

MORTIMER JUNIOR Nay madam, if you be a warrior,  
Ye must not grow so passionate in speeches.

Lords, sith that we are by sufferance of heaven

Arrived and armed in this prince's right,

Here for our country's cause swear we to him

All homage, fealty, and forwardness.

And for the open wrongs and injuries

Edward hath done to us, his Queen, and land,

We come in arms to wreak it with the sword,

That England's Queen in peace may repossess

Her dignities and honours, and withal

We may remove these flatterers from the King,

That havocs England's wealth and treasury.

SIR JOHN Sound trumpets, my lord, and forward let us march;

Edward will think we come to flatter him.

KENT I would he never had been flattered more.

*Trumpets sound. Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene v

*Enter EDWARD THE KING, BALDOCK, and SPENCER JUNIOR, flying about the stage*

SPENCER JUNIOR Fly, fly, my lord! The Queen is over-strong;

Her friends do multiply and yours do fail.

Shape we our course to Ireland, there to breathe.

EDWARD What, was I born to fly and run away,

And leave the Mortimers conquerors behind?

Give me my horse, and let's r'enforce our troops,

And in this bed of honour die with fame.

BALDOCK O no, my lord; this princely resolution

Fits not the time. Away! We are pursued.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene vi

*Enter EDMUND the EARL OF KENT alone with a sword and target*

KENT This way he fled, but I am come too late.

13 patron: a) exemplary; b) benefactor; c) father-figure

16 sufferance: permission

17 this prince's: i.e. young Prince Edward's

19 homage, fealty, and forwardness: respect, loyalty and eagerness

22 wreak: avenge (wreak vengeance)

26 havocs: misuses (literally 'lays waste')

2 fail: a) decline in number; b) die; c) are exhausted

5 the Mortimers: historically inaccurate since Mortimer Senior was dead by this time, not having survived his imprisonment in the Tower of London

7 bed of honour: i.e. England

Edward, alas, my heart relents for thee.  
 Proud traitor Mortimer, why dost thou chase  
 Thy lawful king, thy sovereign, with thy sword?  
 (*Addressing himself*) Vile wretch, and why hast thou,  
 of all unkind,  
 Borne arms against thy brother and thy king?  
 Rain showers of vengeance on my cursèd head,  
 Thou God, to whom in justice it belongs  
 To punish this unnatural revolt.  
 Edward, this Mortimer aims at thy life;  
 O fly him then! But Edmund, calm this rage;  
 Dissemble or thou diest, for Mortimer  
 And Isabel do kiss while they conspire;  
 And yet she bears a face of love, forsooth.  
 Fie on that love that hatcheth death and hate!  
 Edmund, away; Bristol to Longshanks' blood  
 Is false. Be not found single for suspect;  
 Proud Mortimer pries near into thy walks.

*Enter ISABELLA THE QUEEN, MORTIMER JUNIOR, the young PRINCE EDWARD, and SIR JOHN OF HAINAULT with soldiers*

ISABELLA Successful battles gives the God of kings  
 To them that fight in right and fear his wrath. 20  
 Since then successfully we have prevailed,  
 Thanks be heaven's great architect and you.  
 Ere farther we proceed, my noble lords,  
 We here create our well-belovèd son,  
 Of love and care unto his royal person,  
 Lord Warden of the realm; and sith the fates  
 Have made his father so infortunate,  
 Deal you, my lords, in this, my loving lords,  
 As to your wisdoms fittest seems in all.  
 KENT Madam, without offence, if I may ask, 30  
 How will you deal with Edward in his fall?  
 PRINCE EDWARD Tell me, good uncle, what Edward do  
 you mean?  
 KENT Nephew, your father; I dare not call him king.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR My lord of Kent, what needs these  
 questions?  
 'Tis not in her controlment, nor in ours,  
 But as the realm and Parliament shall please,  
 So shall your brother be disposed of.

5 unkind: unnatural (as he is acting against his own brother)  
 12 Dissemble: be deceptive  
 14 forsooth: in truth  
 16-17 Bristol: the Mayor of Bristol has joined the rebellion  
 17 single: alone  
 18 walks: movement  
 22 architect: God  
 you: Isabella's supporters  
 26 Lord Warden: viceroy (appointed during a king's minority)  
 28 Deal: proceed

(*Aside to ISABELLA*) I like not this relenting mood in  
 Edmund;  
 Madam, 'tis good to look to him betimes.  
 ISABELLA (*Aside to MORTIMER JUNIOR*) My lord, the  
 Mayor of Bristol knows our mind? 40  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR (*Aside*) Yea, madam, and they  
 'scape not easily  
 That fled the field.  
 ISABELLA Baldock is with the King;  
 10 A goodly chancellor, is he not, my lord?  
 SIR JOHN So are the Spencers, the father and the son.  
 KENT (*To himself*) This Edward is the ruin of the  
 realm.

*Enter RHYS AP HOWELL, and the MAYOR OF BRISTOL, with SPENCER SENIOR, guarded by soldiers*

RHYS AP HOWELL God save Queen Isabel and her  
 princely son.  
 Madam, the Mayor and citizens of Bristol,  
 In sign of love and duty to this presence,  
 Present by me this traitor to the state—  
 Spencer, the father to that wanton Spencer, 50  
 That, like the lawless Catiline of Rome,  
 Revelled in England's wealth and treasury.  
 ISABELLA We thank you all.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Your loving care in this  
 Deserveth princely favours and rewards.  
 But where's the King and the other Spencer fled?  
 RHYS AP HOWELL Spencer the son, created Earl of  
 Gloucester,  
 Is with that smooth-tongued scholar Baldock gone,  
 And shipped but late for Ireland with the King.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Some whirlwind fetch them back,  
 or sink them all!  
 They shall be started thence, I doubt it not. 60  
 PRINCE EDWARD Shall I not see the King my father  
 yet?  
 KENT (*Aside*) Unhappy Edward, chased from England's  
 bounds.  
 SIR JOHN Madam, what resteth? Why stand ye in a  
 muse?  
 ISABELLA I rue my lord's ill fortune, but, alas,  
 Care of my country called me to this war.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, have done with care and  
 sad complaint;  
 Your king hath wronged your country and himself,

38 relenting: pitying  
 48 presence: i.e. royal presence  
 51 Catiline of Rome: the corrupt Lucius Sergius Catalina  
 (d. 62 BC) whose name was a byword for treason in  
 Elizabethan England  
 58 but late: just lately  
 60 started: forced out from a hiding place (hunting term)  
 63 resteth: remains to be done  
 in a muse: in thought, in a trance

And we must seek to right it as we may.  
 Meanwhile, have hence this rebel to the block;  
 Your lordship cannot privilege your head. 70  
 SPENCER SENIOR Rebel is he that fights against his  
 prince;  
 So fought not they that fought in Edward's right.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Take him away; he prates.  
*Exit SPENCER SENIOR, guarded*  
 You, Rhys ap Howell,  
 Shall do good service to her majesty,  
 Being of countenance in your country here,  
 To follow these rebellious runagates.  
 We in meanwhile, madam, must take advice  
 How Baldock, Spencer, and their complices  
 May in their fall be followed to their end.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene vii

*Enter the ABBOT, MONKS, KING EDWARD, SPENCER JUNIOR, and BALDOCK, the latter three disguised as monks*

ABBOT Have you no doubt, my lord, have you no fear;  
 As silent and as careful will we be  
 To keep your royal person safe with us,  
 Free from suspect and fell invasion  
 Of such as have your majesty in chase—  
 Yourself, and those your chosen company—  
 As danger of this stormy time requires.  
 EDWARD Father, thy face should harbour no deceit;  
 O hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,  
 Pierced deeply with sense of my distress, 10  
 Could not but take compassion of my state.  
 Stately and proud, in riches and in train,  
 Whilom I was powerful and full of pomp;  
 But what is he, whom rule and empery  
 Have not in life or death made miserable?  
 Come Spencer, come Baldock, come sit down by me;  
 Make trial now of that philosophy  
 That in our famous nurseries of arts  
 Thou sucked'st from Plato and from Aristotle.  
 Father, this life contemplative is heaven— 20

- 70 Your lordship . . . your head: 'your new rank will not prevent beheading' (Kinney)  
 75 countenance: authority  
 76 runagates: renegades, traitors  
 77 take advice: consider  
 4 fell: cruel  
 5 chase: pursuit (as in hunting)  
 13 Whilom: formerly  
 pomp: splendour  
 14 empery: empire  
 18 nurseries of arts: the universities at Oxford and Cambridge  
 20 this life contemplative: the reflective, devotional life as opposed to the active life (a standard medieval contrast)

O that I might this life in quiet lead!  
 But we, alas, are chased; and you, my friends,  
 Your lives and my dishonour they pursue.  
 Yet, gentle monks, for treasure, gold nor fee,  
 Do you betray us and our company.  
 MONKS Your grace may sit secure, if none but we  
 Do wot of your abode.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Not one alive; but shrewdly I suspect  
 A gloomy fellow in a mead below;  
 A gave a long look after us, my lord, 30  
 And all the land, I know, is up in arms—  
 Arms that pursue our lives with deadly hate.  
 BALDOCK We were embarked for Ireland, wretched we,  
 With awkward winds and sore tempests driven  
 To fall on shore and here to pine in fear  
 Of Mortimer and his confederates.  
 EDWARD Mortimer! Who talks of Mortimer?  
 Who wounds me with the name of Mortimer,  
 That bloody man? (*Kneeling*) Good father, on thy lap  
 Lay I this head, laden with mickle care. 40  
 O might I never open these eyes again,  
 Never again lift up this drooping head,  
 O never more lift up this dying heart!  
 SPENCER JUNIOR Look up, my lord. Baldock, this  
 drowsiness  
 Betides no good. Here even we are betrayed.

*Enter, with Welsh books, RHYS AP HOWELL, a MOWER, and the EARL OF LEICESTER, with SOLDIERS*

MOWER Upon my life, those be the men ye seek.  
 RHYS AP HOWELL Fellow, enough. (*To LEICESTER*) My  
 lord, I pray be short;  
 A fair commission warrants what we do.  
 LEICESTER (*Aside*) The Queen's commission, urged by  
 Mortimer.  
 What cannot gallant Mortimer with the Queen? 50

- 27 wot: know  
 28 shrewdly: intuitively  
 29 gloomy fellow: the Mower, whom Spencer Junior supposes to be the Grim Reaper, the personification of death  
 mead: meadow  
 below: beyond the walls of the Abbey  
 34 sore: harsh  
 39 bloody: bloodthirsty  
 40 mickle: much (northern English and still used in Scotland)  
 44 drowsiness: an ill omen (see *Arden of Faversham*, v.16–17)  
 SD *Welsh books*: either military weapons or, as many critics think, agricultural tools. Forker convincingly argues for the latter since 'if they are scythelike tools [they] would give visual point to the symbolism of the "gloomy fellow" mentioned earlier and add effectively to our sense of the king's vulnerability by introducing a note of roughness – even of rustic savagery – to the moment of his capture'  
 48 fair commission: legal authority  
 warrants: authorises  
 50 gallant: a) bold; b) her lover

- Alas, see where he sits and hopes unseen  
 T'escape their hands that seek to reave his life.  
 Too true it is: *quem dies vidit veniens superbum,*  
*Hunc dies vidit fugiens iacentem.*  
 But Leicester, leave to grow so passionate.  
 (Aloud) Spencer and Baldock, by no other names,  
 I arrest you of high treason here.  
 Stand not on titles, but obey th'arrest;  
 'Tis in the name of Isabel the Queen.  
 My lord, why droop you thus? 60
- EDWARD O day! The last of all my bliss on earth,  
 Centre of all misfortune. O my stars!  
 Why do you lour unkindly on a king?  
 Comes Leicester, then, in Isabella's name  
 To take my life, my company, from me?  
 Here, man, rip up this panting breast of mine  
 And take my heart in rescue of my friends.
- RHYS AP HOWELL Away with them.  
 SPENCER JUNIOR It may become thee yet  
 To let us take our farewell of his grace.
- ABBOT My heart with pity earns to see this sight; 70  
 A king to bear these words and proud commands!
- EDWARD Spencer, ah sweet Spencer, thus then must  
 we part?
- SPENCER JUNIOR We must, my lord; so will the angry  
 heavens.
- EDWARD Nay, so will hell and cruel Mortimer;  
 The gentle heavens have not to do in this.
- BALDOCK My lord, it is in vain to grieve or storm.  
 Here humbly of your grace we take our leaves;  
 Our lots are cast. I fear me, so is thine.
- EDWARD In heaven we may, in earth never shall we  
 meet.  
 And Leicester, say, what shall become of us? 80
- LEICESTER Your majesty must go to Kenilworth.
- EDWARD 'Must!' 'Tis somewhat hard when kings must  
 go.
- LEICESTER Here is a litter ready for your grace  
 That waits your pleasure; and the day grows old.
- 
- 52 reave: take away by force  
 53-4 *quem dies . . . fugiens iacentem*: from Seneca's *Thyestes*,  
 ll. 613-14. Jasper Heywood translated it in 1560 as:  
 'Whom dawn of the day hath seen in pryde to  
 reign,/Him overthrown hath seen the evening late'  
 55 leave to grow so passionate: 'Leicester's sympathy for  
 Edward here prepares us for his later replacement by  
 Berkeley' (Forker)  
 56 no other names: Spencer and Baldock have been stripped  
 of their recently acquired titles  
 63 lour: frown  
 67 rescue: a) ransom; b) release  
 70 earns: grieves  
 81 Kenilworth: castle and town in Warwickshire. Q has  
 Killingworth which many editors and directors preserve  
 for its ominous overtones  
 83 litter: coach carried by men
- RHYS AP HOWELL As good be gone, as stay and be  
 benighted.
- EDWARD A litter hast thou? Lay me in a hearse,  
 And to the gates of hell convey me hence;  
 Let Pluto's bells ring out my fatal knell,  
 And hags howl for my death at Charon's shore,  
 For friends hath Edward none but these, and these,  
 And these must die under a tyrant's sword. 91
- RHYS AP HOWELL My lord, be going; care not for these,  
 For we shall see them shorter by the heads.
- EDWARD Well, that shall be shall be; part we must:  
 Sweet Spencer, gentle Baldock, part we must.  
 Hence feignèd weeds, unfeignèd are my woes.  
 Father, farewell. Leicester, thou stay'st for me,  
 And go I must. Life, farewell with my friends.  
*Exeunt EDWARD and LEICESTER*
- SPENCER JUNIOR O, is he gone? Is noble Edward gone,  
 Parted from hence, never to see us more? 100  
 Rend, sphere of heaven, and fire forsake thy orb!  
 Earth melt to air! Gone is my sovereign,  
 Gone, gone, alas, never to make return.
- BALDOCK Spencer, I see our souls are fleeted hence;  
 We are deprived the sunshine of our life.  
 Make for a new life, man; throw up thy eyes,  
 And heart and hand to heaven's immortal throne,  
 Pay nature's debt with cheerful countenance.  
 Reduce we all our lessons unto this:  
 To die, sweet Spencer, therefore live we all; 110  
 Spencer, all live to die, and rise to fall.
- RHYS AP HOWELL Come, come, keep these  
 preachments till you come to the place appointed.  
 You, and such as you are, have made wise work in
- 
- 88 Pluto's bells: Pluto was the keeper of the underworld and  
 ruler of the dead  
 89 Charon's shore: the ferryman of the classical world who  
 took the dead across the river Styx (see *The Spanish  
 Tragedy*, I.i.20-2)  
 93 shorter by the heads: i.e. they will be beheaded  
 96 feignèd weeds: false clothes (he removes his monkish  
 disguise)  
 101 Rend: be torn apart  
 sphere of . . . thy orb: some Elizabethan astronomers  
 thought (not uncontroversially) that the sun was a sphere  
 or orb of fire (*coelum igneum*)  
 104 fleeted hence: left our bodies  
 105 the sunshine of our life: i.e. Edward  
 108 Pay nature's debt: die  
 109 Reduce: summarise  
 110-11 To die . . . to fall: Baldock's meditation on death (and  
 tragedy) reminds us of his scholarly background,  
 although the sentiment itself may have seemed a little  
 commonplace to an Elizabethan audience  
 113 preachments: sermons  
 place appointed: place of execution (where the  
 condemned could make a speech to spectators). Rhys ap  
 Howell is in characteristically sarcastic mood

England. Will your lordships away?  
 MOWER Your worship, I trust, will remember me?  
 RHYS AP HOWELL Remember thee, fellow? What else?  
 Follow me to the town.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene i

*Enter* EDWARD THE KING, LEICESTER, *with the* BISHOP OF WINCHESTER, *and* TRUSSEL *for the crown, and attendants*

LEICESTER Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament. Imagine Kenilworth Castle were your court, And that you lay for pleasure here a space, Not of compulsion or necessity.

EDWARD Leicester, if gentle words might comfort me, Thy speeches long ago had eased my sorrows, For kind and loving hast thou always been. The griefs of private men are soon allayed, But not of kings: the forest deer, being struck, Runs to an herb that closeth up the wounds; But when the imperial lion's flesh is gored, He rends and tears it with his wrathful paw, And, highly scorning that the lowly earth Should drink his blood, mounts up into the air. And so it fares with me, whose dauntless mind The ambitious Mortimer would seek to curb, And that unnatural Queen, false Isabel, That thus hath pent and mewed me in a prison. For such outrageous passions cloy my soul, As with the wings of rancour and disdain Full often am I soaring up to heaven To plain me to the gods against them both. But when I call to mind I am a king, Methinks I should revenge me of the wrongs That Mortimer and Isabel have done. But what are kings, when regiment is gone, But perfect shadows in a sunshine day? My nobles rule; I bear the name of king; I wear the crown, but am controlled by them—

By Mortimer and my unconstant Queen 30  
 Who spots my nuptial bed with infamy,  
 Whilst I am lodged within this cave of care,  
 Where sorrow at my elbow still attends  
 To company my heart with sad laments,  
 That bleeds within me for this strange exchange.  
 But tell me, must I now resign my crown  
 To make usurping Mortimer a king?

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER Your grace mistakes; it is for England's good

And princely Edward's right we crave the crown.

EDWARD No, 'tis for Mortimer, not Edward's head, 40  
 For he's a lamb encompassed by wolves  
 Which in a moment will abridge his life.  
 But if proud Mortimer do wear this crown,  
 Heavens turn it to a blaze of quenchless fire,  
 Or, like the snaky wreath of Tisiphon,  
 Engirt the temples of his hateful head;  
 So shall not England's vine be perished,  
 But Edward's name survives, though Edward dies.

LEICESTER My lord, why waste you thus the time away?  
 They stay your answer: will you yield your crown? 50

EDWARD Ah Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook  
 To lose my crown and kingdom without cause,  
 To give ambitious Mortimer my right,  
 That like a mountain overwhelms my bliss;  
 In which extreme my mind here murdered is.  
 But what the heavens appoint, I must obey.

*He removes his crown*

Here, take my crown—the life of Edward too.

Two kings in England cannot reign at once.

But stay awhile; let me be king till night,

That I may gaze upon this glittering crown;

So shall my eyes receive their last content,

My head, the latest honour due to it,

And jointly both yield up their wished right.

Continue ever, thou celestial sun;

Let never silent night possess this clime.

Stand still, you watches of the element;

All times and seasons rest you at a stay,

30 unconstant: unfaithful

35 strange exchange: change of circumstances unnatural to a king

43–4 this crown . . . quenchless fire: in classical mythology Jason deserted Medea for Creusa. Medea gave her a golden crown which burst into flames on her head (see Euripides, *Medea*, ll. 1,186–94)

45 Tisiphon: Tisiphone, one of the Furies who had snakes as hair (see *Arden of Faversham* xiv.151)

47 vine: symbol of royal lineage

50 stay: await

51 weigh: consider

66 watches of the element: the planets and stars. The night was divided in four parts or 'watches'

67 rest you at a stay: i.e. remain fixed

116 remember me: a) with remuneration; b) if the Mower is a symbol of death, the last lines of the act take on a more surreal and haunting aspect

3 lay: resided

space: period of time, an interval

8 allayed: abated

9–10 forest deer . . . the wounds: reference to the belief that a deer, wounded by an arrow, would seek out the healing herb dittany

18 pent: shut up

mewed: caged (a 'mew' was a cage for birds and animals)

19 outrageous: excessive

22 plain me: complain

27 perfect: mere, simple

That Edward may be still fair England's king.  
 But day's bright beams doth vanish fast away,  
 And needs I must resign my wishèd crown. 70  
 Inhuman creatures, nursed with tiger's milk,  
 Why gape you for your sovereign's overthrow?  
 My diadem, I mean, and guiltless life.  
 See, monsters, see, I'll wear my crown again.

*He puts on the crown*

What, fear you not the fury of your king?  
 But hapless Edward, thou art fondly led.  
 They pass not for thy frowns as late they did,  
 But seek to make a new-elected king,  
 Which fills my mind with strange despairing  
 thoughts,  
 Which thoughts are martyred with endless torments;  
 And in this torment, comfort find I none 81  
 But that I feel the crown upon my head.  
 And therefore let me wear it yet a while.

TRUSSEL My lord, the parliament must have present  
 news,

And therefore say, will you resign or no?

*The King rageth*

EDWARD I'll not resign, but whilst I live—  
 Traitors, be gone, and join you with Mortimer.  
 Elect, conspire, install, do what you will;  
 Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries.

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER This answer we'll return, and  
 so farewell. 90

*The BISHOP OF WINCHESTER and TRUSSEL begin  
 to leave*

LEICESTER Call them again, my lord, and speak them  
 fair,

For if they go, the Prince shall lose his right.

EDWARD Call thou them back; I have no power to  
 speak.

LEICESTER My lord, the King is willing to resign.

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER If he be not, let him choose—

EDWARD O would I might! But heavens and earth  
 conspire

To make me miserable. *He removes the crown*

Here, receive my crown.

Receive it? No, these innocent hands of mine  
 Shall not be guilty of so foul a crime.

He of you all that most desires my blood 100  
 And will be called the murderer of a king,  
 Take it. What, are you moved? Pity you me?

71 tiger's milk: tigers were a symbol of cruelty

76 fondly: foolishly

77 pass: care

late: recently

84 present news: a prompt report

86 I'll not . . . I live: the line is metrically short and some  
 editors supply another foot (such as 'be king'), yet the  
 shortened line well reflects Edward's despair

92 right: inheritance

Then send for unrelenting Mortimer  
 And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,  
 Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear.  
 Yet stay, for rather than I will look on them,  
 Here, here! *He gives the crown to the BISHOP*

Now, sweet God of heaven,

Make me despise this transitory pomp,  
 And sit for aye enthronizèd in heaven. 110  
 Come death, and with thy fingers close my eyes,  
 Or if I live, let me forget myself.

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER My lord.

EDWARD Call me not lord! Away, out of my sight!

Ah, pardon me; grief makes me lunatic.

Let not that Mortimer protect my son;

More safety is there in a tiger's jaws

Than his embracements. *He gives a handkerchief*

Bear this to the Queen,

Wet with my tears and dried again with sighs.

If with the sight thereof she be not moved,  
 Return it back and dip it in my blood. 120

Commend me to my son, and bid him rule

Better than I. Yet how have I transgressed,

Unless it be with too much clemency?

TRUSSEL And thus, most humbly, do we take our leave.

EDWARD Farewell. I know the next news that they  
 bring

Will be my death, and welcome shall it be;

To wretched men death is felicity.

*Enter BERKELEY with a letter*

LEICESTER Another post. What news brings he?

EDWARD Such news as I expect. Come, Berkeley, come,  
 And tell thy message to my naked breast. 130

BERKELEY My lord, think not a thought so villainous  
 Can harbour in a man of noble birth.

To do your highness service and devoir,

And save you from your foes, Berkeley would die.

LEICESTER (*Reading the letter*) My lord, the council of  
 the Queen commands

That I resign my charge.

EDWARD And who must keep me now? Must you, my  
 lord?

BERKELEY Ay, my most gracious lord, so 'tis decreed.

EDWARD (*Taking the letter*) By Mortimer, whose name  
 is written here. *He tears up the letter*

Well may I rend his name that rends my heart! 140

This poor revenge hath something eased my mind.

So may his limbs be torn, as is this paper!

Hear me, immortal Jove, and grant it too.

109 for aye enthronizèd: for ever enthroned

115 protect: be Lord Protector (during Prince Edward's  
 minority)

133 devoir: duty

143 Jove: Jupiter, the supreme god of Roman mythology



BERKELEY Your grace must hence with me to Berkeley straight.  
 EDWARD Whither you will; all places are alike,  
 And every earth is fit for burial.  
 LEICESTER (*To BERKELEY*) Favour him, my lord, as  
 much as lieth in you.  
 BERKELEY Even so betide my soul as I use him.  
 EDWARD Mine enemy hath pitied my estate,  
 And that's the cause that I am now removed. 150  
 BERKELEY And thinks your grace that Berkeley will be  
 cruel?  
 EDWARD I know not; but of this am I assured,  
 That death ends all, and I can die but once.  
 Leicester, farewell.  
 LEICESTER Not yet, my lord; I'll bear you on your way.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene ii

*Enter* MORTIMER JUNIOR, *and* QUEEN ISABELLA

MORTIMER JUNIOR Fair Isabel, now have we our desire.  
 The proud corrupters of the light-brained King  
 Have done their homage to the lofty gallows,  
 And he himself lies in captivity.  
 Be ruled by me, and we will rule the realm.  
 In any case, take heed of childish fear,  
 For now we hold an old wolf by the ears,  
 That if he slip will seize upon us both,  
 And grip the sorer, being gripped himself.  
 Think therefore, madam, that imports us much 10  
 To erect your son with all the speed we may,  
 And that I be Protector over him,  
 For our behoof will bear the greater sway  
 Whenas a king's name shall be underwrit.  
 ISABELLA Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel,  
 Be thou persuaded that I love thee well,  
 And therefore, so the Prince my son be safe,  
 Whom I esteem as dear as these mine eyes,  
 Conclude against his father what thou wilt,  
 And I myself will willingly subscribe. 20  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR First would I hear news that he  
 were deposed,  
 And then let me alone to handle him.

148 so betide my soul: 'let my soul be so treated'

149 estate: condition

2 light-brained: wanton, frivolous

7 old wolf by the ears: proverbial

9 grip the sorer: tighten his grip

10 imports us much: it is most important for us

11 erect: establish (on the throne)

13-14 For our . . . be underwrit: i.e. Mortimer and the Queen  
 will have more authority once he can act in the King's  
 name as Protector

19 Conclude: decide

*Enter* MESSENGER

MORTIMER JUNIOR Letters, from whence?  
 MESSENGER From Kenilworth, my lord.  
 ISABELLA How fares my lord the King?  
 MESSENGER In health, madam, but full of pensiveness.  
 ISABELLA Alas, poor soul, would I could ease his grief

*Enter the* BISHOP OF WINCHESTER *with the crown*

Thanks, gentle Winchester.  
 (*To the* MESSENGER) Sirrah, be gone.

*Exit* MESSENGER

BISHOP OF WINCHESTER The King hath willingly  
 resigned his crown.  
 ISABELLA O happy news! Send for the Prince, my son.  
 BISHOP OF WINCHESTER Further, ere this letter was  
 sealed, Lord Berkeley came, 30  
 So that he now is gone from Kenilworth.

And we have heard that Edmund laid a plot  
 To set his brother free; no more but so.

The lord of Berkeley is so pitiful  
 As Leicester that had charge of him before.

ISABELLA Then let some other be his guardian.

*Exit* BISHOP OF WINCHESTER

MORTIMER JUNIOR Let me alone—here is the privy  
 seal.

(*Calls offstage*) Who's there? Call hither Gourney and  
 Maltravers.

To dash the heavy-headed Edmund's drift,  
 Berkeley shall be discharged, the King removed, 40  
 And none but we shall know where he lieth.

ISABELLA But Mortimer, as long as he survives

What safety rests for us, or for my son?

MORTIMER JUNIOR Speak, shall he presently be  
 dispatched and die?

ISABELLA I would he were, so it were not by my means.

*Enter* MALTRAVERS *and* GOURNEY

MORTIMER JUNIOR Enough. Maltravers, write a letter  
 presently

Unto the Lord of Berkeley from ourself,  
 That he resign the King to thee and Gourney;  
 And when 'tis done, we will subscribe our name.

25 pensiveness: melancholy

34 so pitiful: as sympathetic (to Edward)

37 privy seal: the official symbol of royal authority

38 Gourney and Maltravers: according to Holinshed these  
 men were 'Sir Thomas Gourney' and 'the lord  
 Maltreuers' ('Gurney' and 'Matrevis' in Q) but 'Marlowe  
 deprives them of titles and treats them as hired thugs'  
 (Forker)

39 To dash . . . Edmund's drift: 'to frustrate the stupid  
 Edward's plan'

43 rests: remains

44 dispatched: killed

48 resign: surrender, turn over

MALTRAVERS It shall be done, my lord.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Gourney.  
 GOURNEY My lord? 50  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR As thou intendest to rise by  
 Mortimer,  
 Who now makes Fortune's wheel turn as he please,  
 Seek all the means thou canst to make him droop,  
 And neither give him kind word nor good look.  
 GOURNEY I warrant you, my lord.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR And this above the rest, because we  
 hear  
 That Edmund casts to work his liberty,  
 Remove him still from place to place by night,  
 And at the last he come to Kenilworth,  
 And then from thence to Berkeley back again. 60  
 And by the way to make him fret the more,  
 Speak curstly to him; and in any case  
 Let no man comfort him if he chance to weep,  
 But amplify his grief with bitter words.  
 MALTRAVERS Fear not, my lord, we'll do as you  
 command.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR So now away; post thitherwards  
 amain.  
 ISABELLA Whither goes this letter? To my lord the  
 King?  
 Commend me humbly to his majesty,  
 And tell him that I labour all in vain  
 To ease his grief and work his liberty. 70  
 And bear him this, as witness of my love.  
*She gives MALTRAVERS a jewel*  
 MALTRAVERS I will, madam.  
*Exeunt MALTRAVERS and GOURNEY. ISABELLA and  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR REMAIN*  
*Enter the young PRINCE EDWARD and the EARL OF KENT  
 talking with him*  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR (*Aside to ISABELLA*) Finely  
 dissembled; do so still, sweet Queen.  
 Here comes the young Prince with the Earl of Kent.  
 ISABELLA (*Aside to MORTIMER JUNIOR*)  
 Something he whispers in his childish ears.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR (*Aside*) If he have such access unto  
 the Prince,

52 Fortune's wheel: an Elizabethan personification saw Fortune with a wheel which turned to determine human fate, thus the arrogance of those (such as Mortimer Junior) who consider themselves able to control its spin. Marlowe uses the image most effectively in *Tamburlaine*: 'I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains/And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about' (I.ii.174-5)

57 casts: plans

62 curstly: meanly, cruelly

66 post thitherwards amain: go there with speed

73 dissembled: feigned  
 still: continually

Our plots and stratagems will soon be dashed.  
 ISABELLA (*Aside*) Use Edmund friendly, as if all were  
 well.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR How fares my honourable lord of  
 Kent?  
 KENT In health, sweet Mortimer. How fares your  
 grace? 80  
 ISABELLA Well—if my lord your brother were  
 enlarged.  
 KENT I hear of late he hath deposed himself.  
 ISABELLA The more my grief.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR And mine.  
 KENT (*Aside*) Ah, they do dissemble.  
 ISABELLA Sweet son, come hither; I must talk with  
 thee.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR (*To KENT*) Thou, being his uncle  
 and the next of blood,  
 Do look to be Protector over the Prince.  
 KENT Not I, my lord; who should protect the son  
 But she that gave him life—I mean, the Queen? 90  
 PRINCE EDWARD Mother, persuade me not to wear the  
 crown;  
 Let him be king. I am too young to reign.  
 ISABELLA But be content, seeing it his highness'  
 pleasure.  
 PRINCE EDWARD Let me but see him first, and then I  
 will.  
 KENT Ay, do, sweet nephew.  
 ISABELLA Brother, you know it is impossible.  
 PRINCE EDWARD Why, is he dead?  
 ISABELLA No, God forbid.  
 KENT I would those words proceeded from your heart.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Inconstant Edmund, dost thou  
 favour him 100  
 That was a cause of his imprisonment?  
 KENT The more cause have I now to make amends.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR I tell thee 'tis not meet that one so  
 false  
 Should come about the person of a prince.  
 (*To PRINCE EDWARD*) My lord, he hath betrayed the  
 King, his brother,  
 And therefore trust him not.  
 PRINCE EDWARD But he repents and sorrows for it now.  
 ISABELLA Come son, and go with this gentle lord and  
 me.  
 PRINCE EDWARD With you I will, but not with  
 Mortimer.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Why, youngling, 'sdain'st thou so  
 of Mortimer? 110  
 Then I will carry thee by force away.

81 enlarged: released

82 deposed himself: abdicated

92 him: i.e. Edward II

110 'sdain'st: contracted form of 'distainest'

PRINCE EDWARD Help, uncle Kent, Mortimer will wrong me.

*Exit* MORTIMER JUNIOR *with* PRINCE EDWARD  
ISABELLA Brother Edmund, strive not; we are his friends.

Isabel is nearer than the Earl of Kent.  
KENT Sister, Edward is my charge; redeem him.  
ISABELLA Edward is my son, and I will keep him.

*Exit*  
KENT Mortimer shall know that he hath wrongèd me.  
Hence will I haste to Kenilworth Castle  
And rescue agèd Edward from his foes,  
To be revenged on Mortimer and thee.

*Exit*  
120  
*Exit*

### Act V, scene iii

*Enter* MALTRAVERS *and* GOURNEY *with torches, with*  
EDWARD THE KING, *and soldiers*

MALTRAVERS My lord, be not pensive; we are your friends.

Men are ordained to live in misery;  
Therefore come, dalliance dangereth our lives.  
EDWARD Friends, whither must unhappy Edward go?  
Will hateful Mortimer appoint no rest?  
Must I be vexèd like the nightly bird  
Whose sight is loathsome to all winged fowls?  
When will the fury of his mind assuage?  
When will his heart be satisfied with blood?  
If mine will serve, unbowel straight this breast,  
And give my heart to Isabel and him; 10  
It is the chiefest mark they level at.

GOURNEY Not so, my liege; the Queen hath given this charge  
To keep your grace in safety.  
Your passions make your dolours to increase.

EDWARD This usage makes my misery increase.  
But can my air of life continue long  
When all my senses are annoyed with stench?  
Within a dungeon England's king is kept,

114 nearer: i.e. nearer in blood (as a mother compared to an uncle)

115 charge: responsibility  
redeem: release

119 agèd: used to distinguish Edward II from his son.  
Historically Edward was 43 years old at this point  
3 dalliance: delay

6-7 vexèd like . . . winged fowls: the owl (an omen of death) was commonly thought to have been persecuted by birds of the day

10 unbowel: cut open  
straight: at once

12 mark: target  
15 dolours: sadness  
17 air of life: breath

Where I am starved for want of sustenance. 20

My daily diet is heart-breaking sobs,  
That almost rends the closet of my heart.  
Thus lives old Edward, not relieved by any,  
And so must die, though pitied by many.  
O water, gentle friends, to cool my thirst  
And clear my body from foul excrements.

MALTRAVERS Here's channel water, as our charge is given;

Sit down, for we'll be barbers to your grace.  
EDWARD Traitors, away! What, will you murder me,  
Or choke your sovereign with puddle water? 30

GOURNEY No, but wash your face and shave away your beard,

Lest you be known and so be rescuèd.

MALTRAVERS Why strive you thus? Your labour is in vain.

EDWARD The wren may strive against the lion's strength,  
But all in vain; so vainly do I strive  
To seek for mercy at a tyrant's hand. *They wash him*  
*with puddle water, and shave his beard away*

Immortal powers, that knows the painful cares  
That waits upon my poor distressed soul,  
O level all your looks upon these daring men,  
That wrongs their liege and sovereign, England's king.  
O Gaveston, it is for thee that I am wronged; 41  
For me, both thou and both the Spencers died,  
And for your sakes a thousand wrongs I'll take.  
The Spencers' ghosts, wherever they remain,  
Wish well to mine; then tush, for them I'll die.

MALTRAVERS 'Twixt theirs and yours shall be no enmity.  
Come, come away. Now put the torches out;  
We'll enter in by darkness to Kenilworth.

*Enter* EDMUND *the* EARL OF KENT

GOURNEY How now, who comes there?

MALTRAVERS Guard the King sure; it is the Earl of Kent. 50

EDWARD O gentle brother, help to rescue me.  
MALTRAVERS Keep them asunder; thrust in the King.  
KENT Soldiers, let me but talk to him one word.

GOURNEY Lay hands upon the Earl for this assault.  
KENT Lay down your weapons; traitors, yield the King!  
MALTRAVERS Edmund, yield thou thyself, or thou shalt die. *Soldiers seize* KENT

KENT Base villains, wherefore do you grip me thus?

22 closet: private chamber

26 excrements: faeces (but with an older sense of 'hair' that Maltravers and Gourney take to be Edward's meaning)

27 channel: drain, sewer  
charge: command

44 remain: dwell

GOURNEY Bind him, and so convey him to the court.  
 KENT Where is the court but here? Here is the King,  
 And I will visit him. Why stay you me? 60  
 MALTRAVERS The court is where Lord Mortimer  
 remains.  
 Thither shall your honour go; and so, farewell.  
*Exeunt MALTRAVERS and GOURNEY, with*  
 EDWARD THE KING.  
 EDMUND *the* EARL OF KENT *and the* SOLDIERS *remain*  
 KENT O, miserable is that commonweal, where lords  
 Keep courts and kings are locked in prison!  
 SOLDIER Wherefore stay we? On, sirs, to the court.  
 KENT Ay, lead me whither you will, even to my death,  
 Seeing that my brother cannot be released.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene iv

*Enter MORTIMER JUNIOR alone*

MORTIMER JUNIOR The King must die, or Mortimer  
 goes down;  
 The commons now begin to pity him.  
 Yet he that is the cause of Edward's death  
 Is sure to pay for it when his son is of age,  
 And therefore will I do it cunningly.  
 This letter, written by a friend of ours,  
 Contains his death, yet bids them save his life:  
 (*He reads*) 'Edwardum occidere nolite timere, bonum est;  
 Fear not to kill the King, 'tis good he die.'  
 But read it thus, and that's another sense:  
 'Edwardum occidere nolite, timere bonum est;  
 Kill not the King, 'tis good to fear the worst.'  
 Unpointed as it is, thus shall it go,  
 That, being dead, if it chance to be found,  
 Maltravers and the rest may bear the blame,  
 And we be quit that caused it to be done.  
 Within this room is locked the messenger  
 That shall convey it and perform the rest.  
 And by a secret token that he bears,  
 Shall he be murdered when the deed is done. 20  
 Lightborne, come forth.

*Enter LIGHTBORNE*

59 Where is . . . but here: the court was considered to be wherever the monarch was present, rather than a fixed place

63 commonweal: state

2 commons: common people

13 Unpointed: unpunctuated

14 being dead: i.e. once Edward is dead

16 quit: acquitted, exculpated

21 Lightborne: the assassin's name derives from 'Lucifer'; a figure with this name had appeared in the popular Chester cycle of Mystery plays (see Introduction)

Art thou as resolute as thou wast?  
 LIGHTBORNE What else, my lord? And far more  
 resolute.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR And hast thou cast how to  
 accomplish it?  
 LIGHTBORNE Ay, ay, and none shall know which way  
 he died.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR But at his looks, Lightborne, thou  
 wilt relent.  
 LIGHTBORNE Relent? Ha, ha! I use much to relent.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR Well, do it bravely, and be secret.  
 LIGHTBORNE You shall not need to give instructions;  
 'Tis not the first time I have killed a man.  
 I learned in Naples how to poison flowers, 30  
 To strangle with a lawn thrust through the throat,  
 To pierce the windpipe with a needle's point,  
 Or, whilst one is asleep, to take a quill  
 And blow a little powder in his ears,  
 Or open his mouth and pour quicksilver down.  
 But yet I have a braver way than these.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR What's that?  
 LIGHTBORNE Nay, you shall pardon me; none shall  
 know my tricks.  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR I care not how it is, so it be not  
 spied.  
 Deliver this to Gourney and Maltravers. 40  
*He gives the letter to* LIGHTBORNE  
 At every ten miles' end thou hast a horse.  
 (*Giving a token*) Take this. Away, and never see me  
 more.  
 LIGHTBORNE No?  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR No, unless thou bring me news of  
 Edward's death.  
 LIGHTBORNE That will I quickly do. Farewell, my lord.  
*Exit*  
 MORTIMER JUNIOR The Prince I rule, the Queen do I  
 command,  
 And with a lowly congé to the ground  
 The proudest lords salute me as I pass;  
 I seal, I cancel, I do what I will.

26 use much: i.e. am accustomed to (facetiously)

27 bravely: a) fearlessly; b) skilfully

30-6 I learned . . . these: Lightborne's 'training' in Naples plays upon the popular conception of Italy as a place of political (Machiavellian) intrigue and elaborate murder (see Introduction)

31 lawn: linen

34 powder: usually arsenic (a similar fate to that of Hamlet's father in Shakespeare's play (I.v.59-70)

35 quicksilver: mercury

36 braver: more cunning

SD the secret token already referred to in ll. 19-20

47 congé: bow

49 seal: authorise documents

Feared am I more than loved; let me be feared, 50  
 And when I frown, make all the court look pale.  
 I view the Prince with Aristarchus' eyes,  
 Whose looks were as a breeching to a boy.  
 They thrust upon me the protectorship  
 And sue to me for that that I desire.  
 While at the council table, grave enough,  
 And not unlike a bashful Puritan,  
 First I complain of imbecility,  
 Saying it is *onus quam gravissimum*,  
 Till being interrupted by my friends,  
 60 *Susepi* that *provinciam*, as they term it,  
 And to conclude, I am Protector now.  
 Now is all sure: the Queen and Mortimer  
 Shall rule the realm, the King, and none rule us.  
 Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance,  
 And what I list command, who dare control?  
*Maior sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere.*  
 And that this be the coronation day,  
 It pleaseth me, and Isabel the Queen.

*Trumpets sound within*

The trumpets sound; I must go take my place. 70

*Enter the young KING EDWARD III, the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, CHAMPION, NOBLES, and QUEEN ISABELLA*

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY Long live King Edward,  
 by the grace of God,

King of England and Lord of Ireland.

CHAMPION If any Christian, Heathen, Turk, or Jew  
 Dares but affirm that Edward's not true king,  
 And will avouch his saying with the sword,  
 I am the Champion that will combat him.

MORTIMER JUNIOR None comes. Sound trumpets.

*Trumpets sound*

- 
- 50 Feared am . . . be feared: Mortimer Junior alludes to a well-known piece from Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which circulated surreptitiously in Marlowe's time either in manuscript or as *Il Principe*, with a fictitious imprint 'Parlermo' (1584). Edward Dacres translated the book into English for publication in 1640
- 52 Aristarchus: proverbially harsh schoolmaster who lived at Alexandria in the second century BC
- 53 breeching: whipping
- 55 sue: petition
- 57 bashful Puritan: clearly anachronistic; Puritan strictures are here associated with extreme hypocrisy
- 58 imbecility: weakness
- 59 *onus quam gravissimum*: 'a very heavy burden'
- 61 *Susepi* that *provinciam*: 'I have undertaken that office'
- 66 list: desire to
- 67 *Maior sum . . . fortuna nocere*: 'I am so great that Fortune cannot harm me'
- 68 coronation day: historically Edward III was crowned on Candlemas Day 1327 by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Walter Reynolds)

KING EDWARD III Champion, here's to thee.  
*He raises his goblet*

ISABELLA Lord Mortimer, now take him to your charge.

*Enter SOLDIERS with EDMUND the EARL OF KENT prisoner*

MORTIMER JUNIOR What traitor have we there with blades and bills?

SOLDIER Edmund, the Earl of Kent.

60 KING EDWARD III What hath he done? 80

SOLDIER A would have taken the King away perforce,  
 As we were bringing him to Kenilworth.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Did you attempt his rescue,  
 Edmund? Speak.

KENT Mortimer, I did; he is our king,

And thou compell'st this prince to wear the crown.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Strike off his head! He shall have martial law.

KENT Strike off my head? Base traitor, I defy thee.

KING EDWARD III My lord, he is my uncle and shall live.

MORTIMER JUNIOR My lord, he is your enemy and shall die.

KENT Stay, villains. 90

KING EDWARD III Sweet mother, if I cannot pardon him,

Entreat my Lord Protector for his life.

ISABELLA Son, be content; I dare not speak a word.

KING EDWARD III Nor I, and yet methinks I should command;

But seeing I cannot, I'll entreat for him.

(*To* MORTIMER JUNIOR) My lord, if you will let my uncle live,

I will requite it when I come to age.

MORTIMER JUNIOR 'Tis for your highness' good, and for the realm's.

(*To* SOLDIERS) How often shall I bid you bear him hence?

KENT Art thou king? Must I die at thy command? 100

MORTIMER JUNIOR At our command. Once more, away with him.

KENT Let me but stay and speak; I will not go.

Either my brother or his son is king,

And none of both them thirst for Edmund's blood.

And therefore, soldiers, whither will you hale me?

*They hale EDMUND the EARL OF KENT away and carry him to be beheaded*

---

79 blades and bills: swords and halberds

81 perforce: by force, violently

86 martial law: summary execution without trial

101 At our command: Mortimer Junior refers on one level to himself (as Protector) and Isabella, yet 'our' also suggests the royal plural, indicating his own ambition

104 none of both them: neither of them

KING EDWARD III What safety may I look for at his hands,  
 If that my uncle shall be murdered thus?  
 ISABELLA Fear not, sweet boy, I'll guard thee from thy foes.  
 Had Edmund lived, he would have sought thy death.  
 Come son, we'll ride a-hunting in the park. **110**  
 KING EDWARD III And shall my uncle Edmund ride with us?  
 ISABELLA He is a traitor; think not on him. Come.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene v

*Enter MALTRAVERS and GOURNEY*

MALTRAVERS Gourney, I wonder the King dies not,  
 Being in a vault up to the knees in water,  
 To which the channels of the castle run,  
 From whence a damp continually ariseth  
 That were enough to poison any man,  
 Much more a king, brought up so tenderly.  
 GOURNEY And so do I, Maltravers. Yesternight  
 I opened but the door to throw him meat,  
 And I was almost stifled with the savour.  
 MALTRAVERS He hath a body able to endure **10**  
 More than we can inflict; and therefore now  
 Let us assail his mind another while.  
 GOURNEY Send for him out thence, and I will anger him.

*Enter LIGHTBORNE*

MALTRAVERS But stay, who's this?  
 LIGHTBORNE My Lord Protector  
 greets you. *He gives them the letter*  
 GOURNEY What's here? I know not how to construe it.  
 MALTRAVERS Gourney, it was left unpointed for the nonce:  
*(Reading) 'Edwardum occidere nolite timere'—*  
 That's his meaning.  
 LIGHTBORNE *(Showing the token)* Know you this token?  
 I must have the King.  
 MALTRAVERS Ay, stay a while; thou shalt have answer straight. **20**  
*(Aside to GOURNEY)* This villain's sent to make away the King.  
 GOURNEY *(Aside to MALTRAVERS)* I thought as much.  
 MALTRAVERS *(Aside to GOURNEY)* And  
 when the murder's done,  
 See how he must be handled for his labour.

8 meat: food  
 9 savour: stench  
 16 unpointed for the nonce: 'unpunctuated on purpose'  
 21 make away: murder

*Pereat iste!* Let him have the King. What else?  
*(To LIGHTBORNE)* Here is the keys; this is the lake.  
 Do as you are commanded by my lord.  
 LIGHTBORNE I know what I must do; get you away—  
 Yet be not far off; I shall need your help.  
 See that in the next room I have a fire,  
 And get me a spit, and let it be red hot. **30**  
 MALTRAVERS Very well.  
 GOURNEY Need you anything besides?  
 LIGHTBORNE What else? A table and a featherbed.  
 GOURNEY That's all?  
 LIGHTBORNE Ay, ay; so when I call you, bring it in.  
 MALTRAVERS Fear not you that.  
 GOURNEY Here's a light to go into the dungeon.

*Exit MALTRAVERS and GOURNEY*

LIGHTBORNE So now must I about this gear; ne'er was there any  
 So finely handled as this king shall be.  
 Foh! Here's a place indeed with all my heart. **40**

*Enter EDWARD*

EDWARD Who's there? What light is that? Wherefore comes thou?  
 LIGHTBORNE To comfort you and bring you joyful news.  
 EDWARD Small comfort finds poor Edward in thy looks.  
 Villain, I know thou com'st to murder me.  
 LIGHTBORNE To murder you, my most gracious lord?  
 Far is it from my heart to do you harm.  
 The Queen sent me to see how you were used,  
 For she relents at this your misery.  
 And what eyes can refrain from shedding tears  
 To see a king in this most piteous state? **50**  
 EDWARD Weep'st thou already? List awhile to me,  
 And then thy heart, were it as Gourney's is,  
 Or as Maltravers', hewn from the Caucasus,  
 Yet will it melt ere I have done my tale.  
 This dungeon where they keep me is the sink  
 Wherein the filth of all the castle falls.  
 LIGHTBORNE O villains!  
 EDWARD And there in mire and puddle have I stood  
 This ten days' space; and lest that I should sleep,  
 One plays continually upon a drum. **60**

24 *Pereat iste!*: 'Let him die'  
 25 lake: a) dungeon; b) lake of hell  
 33 featherbed: stuffed palliasse  
 38 about this gear: 'get on with this business'  
 40 Foh!: Lightborne reacts to the dungeon's stench  
 47 used: being treated  
 51 List: listen  
 53 Caucasus: the mountain range between the Black and Caspian Seas known for its harsh landscape and bitterly cold winters  
 55 sink: cesspool

They give me bread and water, being a king,  
 So that for want of sleep and sustenance  
 My mind's distempered and my body's numbed,  
 And whether I have limbs or no, I know not.  
 O, would my blood dropped out from every vein,  
 As doth this water from my tattered robes.  
 Tell Isabel the Queen I looked not thus  
 When for her sake I ran at tilt in France  
 And there unhorsed the Duke of Cleremont.  
 LIGHTBORNE O speak no more, my lord; this breaks  
 my heart. 70  
 Lie on this bed and rest yourself awhile.  
 EDWARD These looks of thine can harbour nought but  
 death.  
 I see my tragedy written in thy brows.  
 Yet stay awhile; forbear thy bloody hand,  
 And let me see the stroke before it comes,  
 That even then when I shall lose my life,  
 My mind may be more steadfast on my God.  
 LIGHTBORNE What means your highness to mistrust  
 me thus?  
 EDWARD What means thou to dissemble with me thus?  
 LIGHTBORNE These hands were never stained with  
 innocent blood, 80  
 Nor shall they now be tainted with a king's.  
 EDWARD Forgive my thought, for having such a  
 thought.  
 One jewel have I left; receive thou this.  
 Still fear I, and I know not what's the cause,  
 But every joint shakes as I give it thee.  
 O if thou harbour'st murder in thy heart,  
 Let this gift change thy mind and save thy soul.  
 Know that I am a king—O, at that name,  
 I feel a hell of grief. Where is my crown?  
 Gone, gone. And do I remain alive? 90  
 LIGHTBORNE You're overwatched, my lord; lie down  
 and rest.  
 EDWARD But that grief keeps me waking, I should sleep;  
 For not these ten days have these eyes' lids closed.  
 Now as I speak they fall, and yet with fear  
 Open again. O wherefore sits thou here?  
 LIGHTBORNE If you mistrust me, I'll be gone, my lord.  
 EDWARD No, no, for if thou mean'st to murder me,  
 Thou wilt return again, and therefore stay.  
*He falls asleep*  
 LIGHTBORNE He sleeps.  
 EDWARD (*Starting*) O let me not die! Yet stay, O stay  
 awhile. 100

63 distempered: deranged

68 ran at tilt: jousted

83 jewel: possibly that sent by Isabella at V.ii.71

89–90 Where is . . . remain alive?: Edward means that a king  
 without a crown is usually dead

91 overwatched: lacking sleep

92 grief: distress, anxiety

LIGHTBORNE How now, my lord?  
 EDWARD Something still buzzeth in mine ears  
 And tells me, if I sleep I never wake.  
 This fear is that which makes me tremble thus;  
 And therefore tell me, wherefore art thou come?  
 LIGHTBORNE To rid thee of thy life. Maltravers, come!

*Enter MALTRAVERS*

EDWARD I am too weak and feeble to resist;  
 Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul.  
 LIGHTBORNE Run for the table. *Exit MALTRAVERS*  
*Enter MALTRAVERS with GOURNEY, carrying a table and*  
*hot spit*

EDWARD O spare me, or dispatch me in a trice! 110  
 LIGHTBORNE So, lay the table down and stamp on it;  
 But not too hard, lest that you bruise his body.

*They seize EDWARD and hold him down with the table.*  
 LIGHTBORNE *murders him with the spit. He screams as he*  
*is penetrated and dies*

MALTRAVERS I fear me that this cry will raise the town,  
 And therefore let us take horse and away.

LIGHTBORNE Tell me, sirs, was it not bravely done?

GOURNEY Excellent well. Take this for thy reward.

*Then GOURNEY stabs LIGHTBORNE*

Come, let us cast the body in the moat,  
 And bear the King's to Mortimer, our lord.

Away!

*Exeunt, dragging the bodies*

## Act V, scene vi

*Enter MORTIMER JUNIOR and MALTRAVERS*

MORTIMER JUNIOR Is't done, Maltravers, and the  
 murderer dead?

MALTRAVERS Ay, my good lord; I would it were  
 undone.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Maltravers, if thou now growest  
 penitent

I'll be thy ghostly father; therefore choose

Whether thou wilt be secret in this,

Or else die by the hand of Mortimer.

MALTRAVERS Gourney, my lord, is fled, and will, I fear,  
 Betray us both; therefore let me fly.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Fly to the savages!

MALTRAVERS I humbly thank your honour. *Exit*

MORTIMER JUNIOR As for myself, I stand as Jove's huge  
 tree, 11

And others are but shrubs compared to me.

102 buzzeth: whispers

115 bravely: skilfully

9 to the savages: i.e. beyond 'civilisation'

11 Jove's huge tree: the oak (like Jove because of its size and  
 strength)

All tremble at my name, and I fear none;  
Let's see who dare impeach me for his death.

*Enter ISABELLA THE QUEEN*

ISABELLA Ah, Mortimer, the King my son hath news  
His father's dead, and we have murdered him.

MORTIMER JUNIOR What if he have? The King is yet a  
child.

ISABELLA Ay, ay, but he tears his hair and wrings his  
hands,  
And vows to be revenged upon us both.  
Into the council chamber he is gone 20  
To crave the aid and succour of his peers.

*Enter KING EDWARD III, with the LORDS and attendants*

Ay me, see where he comes, and they with him.  
Now, Mortimer, begins our tragedy.

FIRST LORD Fear not, my lord; know that you are a king.

KING EDWARD III Villain!

MORTIMER JUNIOR How now, my lord?

KING EDWARD III Think not that I am frighted with  
thy words.

My father's murdered through thy treachery,  
And thou shalt die; and on his mournful hearse  
Thy hateful and accursèd head shall lie 30  
To witness to the world that by thy means  
His kingly body was too soon interred.

ISABELLA Weep not, sweet son.

KING EDWARD III Forbid not me to weep; he was my  
father.

And had you loved him half so well as I,  
You could not bear his death thus patiently.  
But you, I fear, conspired with Mortimer.

FIRST LORD (*To MORTIMER JUNIOR*) Why speak you  
not unto my lord the King?

MORTIMER JUNIOR Because I think it scorn to be  
accused.

Who is the man dare say I murdered him? 40

KING EDWARD III Traitor, in me my loving father  
speaks

And plainly saith, 'twas thou that murd'redst him.

MORTIMER JUNIOR But hath your grace no other proof  
than this?

KING EDWARD III Yes, if this be the hand of Mortimer.

*He presents a letter*

MORTIMER JUNIOR (*Aside to ISABELLA*) False Gourney  
hath betrayed me and himself.

ISABELLA (*Aside to MORTIMER JUNIOR*) I feared as  
much; murder cannot be hid.

17 yet: still

21 succour: support

36 patiently: calmly

46 murder cannot be hid: proverbial; see *The Spanish Tragedy*:  
'The heavens are just, murder cannot be hid' (II.v.57)

MORTIMER JUNIOR 'Tis my hand; what gather you by  
this?

KING EDWARD III That thither thou didst send a  
murderer.

MORTIMER JUNIOR What murderer? Bring forth the  
man I sent.

KING EDWARD III Ah, Mortimer, thou knowest that he  
is slain; 50

And so shalt thou be too. Why stays he here?

Bring him unto a hurdle, drag him forth;

Hang him, I say, and set his quarters up!

But bring his head back presently to me.

ISABELLA For my sake, sweet son, pity Mortimer.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Madam, entreat not; I will rather  
die

Than sue for life unto a paltry boy.

KING EDWARD III Hence with the traitor, with the  
murderer.

MORTIMER JUNIOR Base Fortune, now I see that in thy  
wheel

There is a point to which, when men aspire, 60

They tumble headlong down; that point I touched,

And seeing there was no place to mount up higher,

Why should I grieve at my declining fall?

Farewell, fair Queen. Weep not for Mortimer,

That scorns the world, and as a traveller

Goes to discover countries yet unknown.

KING EDWARD III What! Suffer you the traitor to  
delay?

*Exit MORTIMER JUNIOR under guard, with the*

FIRST LORD

ISABELLA As thou received'st thy life from me,

Spill not the blood of gentle Mortimer.

KING EDWARD III This argues that you spilt my father's  
blood, 70

Else would you not entreat for Mortimer.

ISABELLA I spill his blood? No!

KING EDWARD III Ay, madam, you; for so the rumour  
runs.

ISABELLA That rumour is untrue; for loving thee

Is this report raised on poor Isabel.

KING EDWARD III I do not think her so unnatural.

SECOND LORD My lord, I fear me it will prove too true.

52 hurdle: a frame or sledge on which condemned prisoners  
were transported

53 Hang him . . . quarters up: 'Mortimer Junior is to be  
hanged, drawn and quartered rather than merely  
beheaded, the normal privilege of aristocratic traitors  
granted even to Gaveston, Baldock and the Spencers'  
(Wiggins and Lindsey)

66 countries yet unknown: i.e. the lands beyond death

75 Is this . . . poor Isabel: she tries to imply that the rumours  
are only the result of her attempts (with Mortimer) to  
safeguard the throne



KING EDWARD III Mother, you are suspected for his death,

And therefore we commit you to the Tower  
Till further trial may be made thereof;  
If you be guilty, though I be your son,  
Think not to find me slack or pitiful.

ISABELLA Nay, to my death, for too long have I lived  
Whenas my son thinks to abridge my days.

KING EDWARD III Away with her. Her words enforce  
these tears,

And I shall pity her if she speak again.

ISABELLA Shall I not mourn for my belovèd lord,  
And with the rest accompany him to his grave?

SECOND LORD Thus, madam, 'tis the King's will you  
shall hence.

ISABELLA He hath forgotten me; stay, I am his mother.

SECOND LORD That boots not; therefore, gentle  
madam, go.

80

ISABELLA Then come, sweet death, and rid me of this  
grief. *Exit under guard*

*Enter* FIRST LORD *with the head of* MORTIMER JUNIOR

FIRST LORD My lord, here is the head of Mortimer.

KING EDWARD III Go fetch my father's hearse, where it  
shall lie,

And bring my funeral robes. *Exeunt attendants*  
*Accursèd head!*

Could I have ruled thee then, as I do now,  
Thou hadst not hatched this monstrous treachery.

*Enter attendants with the hearse of* KING EDWARD II *and*  
*funeral robes*

Here comes the hearse; help me to mourn, my lords.

Sweet father, here unto thy murdered ghost

I offer up this wicked traitor's head. **100**

And let these tears, distilling from mine eyes,

Be witness of my grief and innocency.

*Exeunt, with a funeral march*

91

FINIS

---

79 to the Tower: historically Isabel was placed under house  
arrest at Castle Rising in Norfolk

80 trial: investigation

84 abridge: shorten

85 enforce: produce

91 boots: matters

---

101 distilling: falling from (in droplets)

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## Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

First performed 1603

First published 1607

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‘What can sooner print modesty in the souls of the wanton than by discovering unto them the monstrousness of their sin?’ So wrote Thomas Heywood in his defence of the contemporary stage, *An Apology for Actors* (1612), in which he argued that drama worked by example to extol virtue and reform vice. *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, explicitly concerned as it is with feminine modesty and wantonness, in many ways could be said to be the dramatic exemplification of Heywood’s rhetoric: in this play, the familiar iconic figures of the unchaste and the chaste woman are manifested in the contrasting forms of an adulterous wife, Anne Frankford, and a dutiful sister, Susan Mountford. In accordance with Heywood’s claim for the admonitory moral power of drama, the former is rewarded with ostracism, self-loathing and death, the latter with marriage and an elevated social position.

If we accept Heywood’s claims for the didacticism of drama, this begs the question of what precisely this play is teaching. Some critics, such as Adams and Ure, have read it as a moral homily, or at least as working within an explicitly Christian framework. Such readings see the play as, on the one hand, exhorting women to virtue (Anne herself explicitly urges the married women in the audience to ‘[m]ake me your instance’ (xiii.141)), and, on the other hand, recommending men to respond to such transgressions with Christian forgiveness (Anne’s husband does not punish her adultery with death, as he might have done, but with banishment). However, such conclusions serve to gloss over some of the play’s ambiguities. One dimension of these ambiguities is signalled by the play’s paradoxical title: in what sense might it be ‘kind’ to kill a woman? The closing line of the play suggests that the ‘kindness’ of the title is Frankford’s, in foregoing revenge and merely banishing Anne, thereby allowing her the opportunity to repent and obtain forgiveness. Some might ask, though, whether this is a case of Frankford having revenge by the back door, and with a clear conscience. He might exhibit Christian mercy in not killing Anne and her lover, Wendoll, when he first discovers them, but he nonetheless sees his wife die as a direct result of her adultery and, to boot, is able to transfer the responsibility for her death on to Anne herself. This reading is given some weight by Frankford’s vow to

‘torment thy soul/ And kill thee even with kindness’ (xiii.153–4).

Frankford’s kindness extends not only to his wife, however, but also to Wendoll, whom he welcomes into his household with such unexpected enthusiasm and warmth as to trouble even Wendoll himself, who remarks that ‘This kindness grows of no alliance ’twixt us’ (vi.33). is integration into Frankford’s ‘family’ (a term which at this time still denoted all members of the extended household) shifts the emotional centre of gravity away from the husband and wife so recently celebrated in idealised terms for their mutual adoration, sympathy and equality (i.55–72), and towards the friendship between Frankford and Wendoll, the latter characterising this new-found intimacy in striking terms: ‘I am to his body/As necessary as his digestion’ (vi.41–2). We might, then, reread the title to take account of this initial, destabilising act of ‘kindness’ on the part of Frankford towards Wendoll, and its part in the ensuing events.

There are other instances of ‘kindness’ in the play which further complicate the word’s meanings. Turning to the sub-plot, for example, Acton’s ‘kindness’ to his enemy Mountford in discharging his debts suggests the way that generosity can serve as an act of manipulation on the part of the giver, and as a torment to the receiver by conferring painful obligations; as Mountford says, ‘His kindness like a burden hath surcharged me’ (xiv.63). Furthermore, instances of ‘unkindness’ in the play serve to remind us that the etymological relationship between the words ‘kind’ and ‘kin’ does not necessarily translate into a ‘kindness’ in familial relationships. Mountford’s plight is met with uniform unkindness from his family (see scene ix), an unkindness matched or surpassed by his own attempt to prostitute his sister Susan to Acton in order to preserve his own honour. This etymological link might, in turn, suggest yet another inflection within the play’s title: Anne Frankford can be seen as a woman killed by ‘kindness’ in the sense of ‘kinship’. She is defined and constrained by a series of social and legal prescriptions concerning her familial position and duties, and it is these, ultimately, that result in her death. ‘Kindness’ in this play never denotes simple acts of generosity, nor confirms straightforwardly the ties of kinship, but is

always riven by competing impulses and implications.

Heywood's plot, drawn in part from the English translation of an Italian novella by Illicini which had appeared in translation in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566), is an unusual example of the dramatic sub-genre of 'domestic tragedy'. Unlike *Arden of Faversham*, for example, a play with which this otherwise has much in common, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* does not revolve around a murder, and neither is it based on recent historical events. In other respects, however, this play epitomises the distinctive 'domestic' character of this group of plays. Like *Arden of Faversham*, this play works with the structures, dynamics and ideologies informing a middle-rank household and marriage, and troubles these by showing the pressures and contradictions manifest within and upon them. Whilst this might have been a 'barren subject' (Prologue, line 5) in comparison with the excesses of plot, rhetoric and situation of other contemporary tragedies, it is perhaps this very domesticity—still familiar, still exercising us, yet made strange by the framing of the central 'domestic' relationships—that constitutes the interest of these plays for modern readers and audiences.

### Textual note

The copytext for this edition is the first edition of 1607 (referred to in the footnotes to the text as Q<sub>1</sub>). The second edition of the play is lost, but major differences between Q<sub>1</sub> and the third edition (Q<sub>3</sub>) of 1617 are footnoted.

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### Works of related interest

- William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* (1591)  
 William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597)  
 Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker and William Haughton,  
*Patient Grissel* (1600)  
 Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1604)  
 William Shakespeare, *Othello* (1604)  
 George Wilkins, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607)  
 Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women* (1625)

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## *A Woman Killed with Kindness\** (1603)

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### Dramatis personae

JOHN FRANKFORD

ANNE FRANKFORD, *his wife, sister of Sir Francis Acton*

WENDOLL, *friend of Frankford*

SIR CHARLES MOUNTFORD

SUSAN MOUNTFORD, *his sister*

SIR FRANCIS ACTON

CRANWELL, *friend of Frankford*

MALBY, *friend of Sir Francis*

OLD MOUNTFORD, *uncle of Sir Charles*

TYDY, *cousin of Sir Charles*

SANDY, *former friend of Sir Charles*

RODER, *former tenant of Sir Charles*

SHAFTON, *false friend of Sir Charles*

NICK, *servant of Frankford*

JENKIN, *servant of Frankford*

SPIGGOT, *Frankford's butler*

SISLY MILK-PAIL, *serviſgwoman to Frankford*

ROGER BRICKBAT }  
JACK SLIME } *country men, Frankford's farm servants*

JOAN MINIVER }  
JANE TRUBKIN } *country women, Frankford's farm servants*  
ISBEL MOTLEY }

SHERIFF

KEEPER OF THE PRISON

SERGEANT

MUSICIANS, HUNTSMEN, FALCONERS, SERVINGMEN,  
SERVINGWOMEN, CARTERS, COACHMAN, FRANKFORD'S  
CHILDREN, OFFICERS

### The Prologue

I come but like a harbinger, being sent  
To tell you what these preparations mean:  
Look for no glorious state, our muse is bent  
Upon a barren subject, a bare scene.  
We could afford this twig a timber tree,  
Whose strength might boldly on your favours build;  
Our russet, tissue; drone, a honey bee;  
Our barren plot, a large and spacious field;  
Our coarse fare, banquets; our thin water, wine;  
Our brook, a sea; our bat's eyes, eagle's sight;      10  
Our poet's dull and earthy muse, divine:  
Our ravens, doves; our crow's black feathers, white.  
    But gentle thoughts, when they may give the foil,  
    Save them that yield, and spare where they may spoil.

### Scene i

*Enter* MASTER JOHN FRANKFORD, MISTRESS ANNE,  
SIR FRANCIS ACTON, SIR CHARLES MOUNTFORD,  
MASTER MALBY, MASTER WENDOLL, *and* MASTER  
CRANWELL

SIR FRANCIS Some music there! None lead the bride a  
dance?

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\* The title is proverbial. Van Fossen notes other Renaissance examples of its use, the most famous being in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1591), when Petruchio promises to torment Kate, pretending 'That all is done in reverent care of her': 'This is a way to kill a wife with kindness./And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humour' (IV.1.185, 189-90)

3 glorious state: ostentatious splendour

5 afford . . . tree: wish this twig were a tree

7 russet: coarse cloth

tissue: fine cloth

11 Our poet's . . . divine: Sturgess punctuates thus: 'Our poets dull and earthy, Muse divine'. We follow here the punctuation of Van Fossen and Scobie

13 gentle thoughts: i.e. those of the audience

give the foil: overthrow (term from wrestling)

Scene i: there are no Act or scene divisions in Qs. We

follow recent eds in dividing the play into seventeen scenes

SIR CHARLES Yes, would she dance 'The Shaking of the Sheets'.

But that's the dance her husband means to lead her.

WENDOLL That's not the dance that every man must dance

According to the ballad.

SIR FRANCIS Music ho!

By your leave, sister—by your husband's leave  
I should have said—the hand that but this day  
Was given you in the church I'll borrow. Sound!  
This marriage music hoists me from the ground. 9

FRANKFORD Aye, you may caper, you are light and free.

Marriage hath yoked my heels, pray then pardon me.

SIR FRANCIS I'll have you dance too, brother.

SIR CHARLES Master Frankford,

You are a happy man, sir, and much joy  
Succeed your marriage mirth; you have a wife  
So qualified and with such ornaments  
Both of the mind and body. First, her birth  
Is noble, and her education such  
As might become the daughter of a prince;  
Her own tongue speaks all tongues, and her own  
hand

Can teach all strings to speak in their best grace, 20  
From the shrill treble, to the hoarsest bass.

To end her many praises in one word,  
She's beauty and perfection's eldest daughter,  
Only found by yours, though many a heart hath  
sought her.

FRANKFORD But that I know your virtues and chaste  
thoughts,

I should be jealous of your praise, Sir Charles.

CRANWELL He speaks no more than you approve.

MALBY Nor flatters he that gives to her her due.

ANNE I would your praise could find a fitter theme

Than my imperfect beauty to speak on. 30  
Such as they be, if they my husband please,  
They suffice me now I am married.  
His sweet content is like a flattering glass,  
To make my face seem fairer to mine eye,  
But the least wrinkle from his stormy brow,  
Will blast the roses in my cheeks that grow.

SIR FRANCIS A perfect wife already, meek and patient.

How strangely the word 'husband' fits your mouth,  
Not married three hours since, sister. 'Tis good;  
You that begin betimes thus, must needs prove 40  
Pliant and duteous in your husband's love.  
Godamercies, brother, wrought her to it already?

2 'The . . . Sheets': popular tune and ballad, with sexual allusion (in the ballad, the dance is of death; see ll. 4-5)

15 qualified: with such qualities

21 shrill Q<sub>1</sub> (shrill'st Q<sub>3</sub>)

27 approve: confirm

42 Godamercies Q<sub>1</sub> (Gramercies Q<sub>3</sub>). An exclamation of approval

'Sweet husband,' and a curtsy the first day.  
Mark this, mark this, you that are bachelors,  
And never took the grace of honest man,  
Mark this against you marry, this one phrase:  
'In a good time that man both wins and woos  
That takes his wife down in her wedding shoes.'

FRANKFORD Your sister takes not after you, Sir Francis.

All his wild blood your father spent on you; 50  
He got her in his age when he grew civil.  
All his mad tricks were to his land entailed,  
And you are heir to all. Your sister, she  
Hath to her dower her mother's modesty.

SIR CHARLES Lord, sir, in what a happy state live you;

This morning, which to many seems a burden  
Too heavy to bear, is unto you a pleasure.

This lady is no clog, as many are.

She doth become you like a well-made suit  
In which the tailor hath used all his art, 60

Not like a thick coat of unseasoned frieze,  
Forced on your back in summer; she's no chain  
To tie your neck, and curb you to the yoke,  
But she's a chain of gold to adorn your neck.

You both adorn each other, and your hands  
Methinks are matches. There's equality

In this fair combination; you are both scholars,  
Both young, both being descended nobly.

There's music in this sympathy, it carries  
Consort and expectation of much joy, 70

Which God bestow on you, from this first day  
Until your dissolution—that's for aye.

SIR FRANCIS We keep you here too long, good brother  
Frankford.

Into the hall! Away, go cheer your guests!

What, bride, and bridegroom both withdrawn at  
once?

If you be missed, the guests will doubt their welcome,  
And charge you with unkindness!

FRANKFORD To prevent it,  
I'll leave you here, to see the dance within.

45 took . . . man: i.e. married

46 against: in anticipation of the time when

47 In . . . time: at the right moment

48 takes . . . shoes: 'that tames his wife at once' (Van Fossen)

50 spent: expended

51 got: begot

civil: more responsible or respectable

52 to . . . entailed: 'bestowed inseparable with the land' (Scobie)

54 to her dower: as her dowry

58 clog: impediment

61 unseasoned: unseasonable

frieze: coarse woollen cloth

65-6 your . . . matches: you are well matched

69 sympathy: harmony

70 Consort: a) harmony; b) companionship

ANNE And so will I. *Exeunt FRANKFORD and ANNE*  
 SIR FRANCIS To part you it were sin.  
 Now gallants, while the town musicians  
 Finger their frets within, and the mad lads  
 And country lasses, every mother's child  
 With nosegays and bride-laces in their hats,  
 Dance all their country measures, rounds and jigs,  
 What shall we do? Hark, they are all on the hoigh;  
 They toil like mill horses, and turn as round—  
 Marry, not on the toe. Ay, and they caper,  
 But without cutting. You shall see tomorrow  
 The hall floor pecked and dinted like a millstone,  
 Made with their high shoes; though their skill be  
 small,  
 Yet they tread heavy where their hobnails fall.  
 SIR CHARLES Well, leave them to their sports. Sir  
 Francis Acton,  
 I'll make a match with you: meet me tomorrow  
 At Chevy Chase, I'll fly my hawk with yours.  
 SIR FRANCIS For what? For what?  
 SIR CHARLES Why, for a hundred pound.  
 SIR FRANCIS Pawn me some gold of that.  
 SIR CHARLES Here are ten angels;  
 I'll make them good a hundred pound tomorrow  
 Upon my hawk's wing.  
 SIR FRANCIS 'Tis a match, 'tis done.  
 Another hundred pound upon your dogs,  
 Dare you Sir Charles?  
 SIR CHARLES I dare. Were I sure to lose 100  
 I durst do more than that. Here's my hand,  
 The first course for a hundred pound.  
 SIR FRANCIS A match.  
 WENDOLL Ten angels on Sir Francis Acton's hawk;  
 As much upon his dogs.  
 CRANWELL I am for Sir Charles Mountford; I have  
 seen  
 His hawk and dog both tried. What, clap you hands?  
 Or is't no bargain?  
 WENDOLL Yes, and stake them down;  
 Were they five hundred they were all my own.  
 SIR FRANCIS Be stirring early with the lark tomorrow.  
 I'll rise into my saddle ere the sun  
 Rise from his bed. 110

81 frets: divisions on fingerboard of lute  
 83 bride-laces: 'pieces of lace used to bind up pieces of  
 rosemary worn at weddings' (Sturgess)  
 85 on the hoigh: excited  
 86 as round: as easily, as briskly (OED)  
 87 not . . . toe: 'i.e. flat-footed' (Van Fossen)  
 88 cutting: twirling the feet  
 96 Pawn: pledge  
 angels: gold coins  
 102 course: race or competition between two dogs  
 106 clap: shake (to confirm the agreement)  
 107 stake them down: 'put down stake-money' (Sturgess)

SIR CHARLES If there you miss me, say  
 I am no gentleman; I'll hold my day.  
 SIR FRANCIS It holds on all sides. Come, tonight let's  
 dance.  
 Early tomorrow let's prepare to ride;  
 We had need be three hours up before the bride.  
*Exeunt*

## Scene ii

*Enter NICK and JENKIN, JACK SLIME, ROGER BRICKBAT  
 with COUNTRY WENCHES including SISLY MILK-PAIL, and  
 TWO or THREE MUSICIANS*

JENKIN Come Nick, take you Joan Miniver to trace  
 withall; Jack Slime, traverse you with Sisly Milk-pail.  
 I will take Jane Trubkin, and Roger Brickbat shall  
 have Isbel Motley; and now that they are busy in the  
 parlour, come, strike up, we'll have a crash here in the  
 yard.  
 NICK My humour is not compendious: dancing I  
 possess not, though I can foot it; yet since I am fallen  
 into the hands of Sisly Milk-pail, I assent. 9  
 JACK SLIME Truly Nick, though we were never brought  
 up like serving courtiers, yet we have been brought up  
 with serving creatures, ay and God's creatures too, for  
 we have been brought up to serve sheep, oxen, horses  
 and hogs, and such like; and though we be but  
 country fellows, it may be in the way of dancing we  
 can do the horse-trick as well as servingmen.  
 ROGER BRICKBAT Ay, and the cross-point too.  
 JENKIN O Slime, O Brickbat! Do not you know that  
 comparisons are odious? Now we are odious ourselves  
 too, therefore there are no comparisons to be made  
 betwixt us. 21  
 NICK I am sudden, and not superfluous;  
 I am quarrelsome, and not seditious;  
 I am peaceable, and not contentious;  
 I am brief, and not compendious.  
 Slime, foot it quickly. If the music overcome not my  
 melancholy I shall quarrel, and if they suddenly do  
 not strike up, I shall presently strike thee down.

112 hold my day: keep my appointment  
 1 trace: dance  
 2 traverse: dance  
 5 crash: frolic  
 7 humour: disposition  
 compendious: Nick's error for 'comprehensive' (eds)  
 9 assent Q1 (consent Q3)  
 11 like . . . courtiers: 'i.e. like gentlemen' (Scobie)  
 16, 17 horse-trick, cross-point: 'dances, with sexual  
 implication' (Sturgess)  
 22 sudden . . . superfluous: prompt, but without doing more  
 than is necessary  
 25 compendious: succinct, concise, economical. Unclear  
 how this is in opposition to 'brief'; see l. 7

JENKIN No quarelling, for God's sake! Truly, if you do,  
I shall set a knave between you. 30

JACK SLIME I come to dance, not to quarrel. Come,  
what shall it be? 'Rogero'?

JENKIN 'Rogero'? No, we will dance 'The Beginning of  
the World'.

SISLY I love no dance so well as 'John, Come Kiss Me  
Now'.

NICK Ay, that have ere now deserved a cushion, call for  
'The Cushion Dance'.

ROGER BRICKBAT For my part, I like nothing so well as  
'Tom Tyler'. 40

JENKIN No, we'll have 'The Hunting of the Fox'.

JACK SLIME 'The Hay', 'The Hay', there's nothing like  
'The Hay'.

NICK I have said, I do say, and I will say again—

JENKIN Every man agree to have it as Nick says.

ALL Content.

NICK It hath been, it now is, and it shall be—

SISLY What Master Nich'las, what?

NICK 'Put on Your Smock a Monday'. 49

JENKIN So the dance will come cleanly off. Come, for  
God's sake agree of something! If you like not that,  
put it to the musicians or let me speak for all, and  
we'll have 'Sellenger's Round'.

ALL That! That! That!

NICK No, I am resolved thus it shall be:  
First take hands, then take you to your heels.

JENKIN Why, would you have us run away?

NICK No, but I would have you shake your heels.  
Music, strike up!

*They dance. NICK dancing speaks stately and scurvily, the  
rest after the country fashion.*

JENKIN Hey, lively my lasses, here's a turn for thee. 60  
*Exeunt*

### Scene iii

*Wind horns. Enter SIR CHARLES, SIR FRANCIS, MALBY,  
CRANWELL, WENDOLL, FALCONERS, and HUNTSMEN*

SIR CHARLES So! Well cast off. Aloft, aloft! Well  
flown!  
O now she takes her at the souse, and strikes her

- 30 knave: i.e. himself  
32 'Rogero': the name of a popular dance tune, as are the  
other names that follow  
37 deserved a cushion: 'earned the right to some luxury'  
(Van Fossen)  
49 Smock: a woman's undergarment  
SD *speaks*: reveals, shows himself  
*scurvily*: sourly, rudely  
SD *Wind*: blow  
FALCONERS: eds (falconer Q<sub>5</sub>)  
The scene opens in the middle of the hawking match  
2 at the souse: as the prey rises from the ground

Down to the earth, like a swift thunderclap.

WENDOLL She hath struck ten angels out of my way.

SIR FRANCIS A hundred pound from me.

SIR CHARLES What, falconer!

FALCONER At hand, sir.

SIR CHARLES Now she hath seized the fowl, and 'gins  
to plume her,  
Rebeck her not; rather stand still and check her.  
So! Seize her gets, her jesses, and her bells.  
Away! 10

SIR FRANCIS My hawk killed too.

SIR CHARLES Ay, but 'twas at the querre,  
Not at the mount, like mine.

SIR FRANCIS Judgement, my masters!

CRANWELL Yours missed her at the ferre.

WENDOLL Ay, but our merlin first hath plumed the  
fowl,  
And twice renewed her from the river too.  
Her bells, Sir Francis, had not both one weight,  
Nor was one semitune above the other;  
Methinks these Milan bells do sound too full,  
And spoil the mounting of your hawk.

SIR CHARLES 'Tis lost.

SIR FRANCIS I grant it not. Mine likewise seized a fowl  
Within her talents, and you saw her paws 21  
Full of the feathers; both her petty singles  
And her long singles gripped her more than other.  
The terrials of her legs were stained with blood;  
Not of the fowl only she did discomfit  
Some of her feathers, but she brake away.  
Come, come, your hawk is but a riffer.

- 2-3 O . . . thunderclap: punctuated as prose in Q<sub>5</sub>  
8 rebeck: recall  
9 gets . . . bells: 'jesses' (leather straps) and bells were  
attached to the hawk's legs; 'gets' are probably the same  
as jesses  
11 at the querre: i.e. before the prey rose from the ground  
13 ferre: a falconry term indicating one or other side of the  
river  
14 merlin: type of hawk  
15 renewed: driven back  
16-17 Her bells . . . other: i.e. the bells were not pitched and  
weighted as they ought to be  
21 talents: talons  
22-3 petty . . . long singles: outer and middle claws  
24 terrials: eds agree this is an error, probably for 'terrets'  
(part of hawk's harness)  
24-6 with blood . . . away: 'i.e. our hawk drew blood, not just  
feathers, but the prey escaped' (Scobie)  
25 discomfit: tear out  
27-31 Come . . . perch: Sturgess attributes l. 27 to Sir Charles,  
allowing him then to follow Q<sub>1</sub>'s speech ascriptions. We  
follow Van Fossen and Scobie in adopting Q<sub>3</sub>'s  
ascriptions  
27 riffer: 'hawk which seizes feathers without capturing its  
prey' (Sturgess)



SIR CHARLES How?  
 SIR FRANCIS Ay, and your dogs are trindle-tails and  
 curs.  
 SIR CHARLES You stir my blood!  
 You keep not a good hound in all your kennel, 30  
 Nor one good hawk upon your perch.  
 SIR FRANCIS How, knight?  
 SIR CHARLES So, knight? You will not swagger, sir?  
 SIR FRANCIS Why, say I did?  
 SIR CHARLES Why sir, I say you would gain as much by  
 swaggering  
 As you have got by wagers on your dogs.  
 You will come short in all things.  
 SIR FRANCIS Not in this!  
 Now I'll strike home.  
 SIR CHARLES Thou shalt to thy long home,  
 Or I will want my will.  
 SIR FRANCIS All they that love Sir Francis, follow me.  
 SIR CHARLES All that affect Sir Charles draw on my  
 part. 40  
 CRANWELL On this side heaves my hand.  
 WENDOLL Here goes my heart.  
*They divide themselves.* SIR CHARLES, CRANWELL,  
 FALCONER, and HUNTSMAN *fight against* SIR  
 FRANCIS, WENDOLL, *his* FALCONER, and HUNTSMAN,  
*and* SIR CHARLES *hath the better, and beats them*  
*away, killing both of Sir Francis his men. Exeunt all*  
*except* SIR CHARLES  
 SIR CHARLES My God! What have I done? What have  
 I done?  
 My rage hath plunged into a sea of blood  
 In which my soul lies drowned, poor innocent  
 For whom we are to answer. Well, 'tis done,  
 And I remain the victor. A great conquest,  
 When I would give this right hand, nay this head,  
 To breathe in them new life whom I have slain.  
 Forgive me God, 'twas in the heat of blood,  
 And anger quite removes me from myself: 50  
 It was not I, but rage, did this vile murder;  
 Yet I, and not my rage, must answer it.  
 Sir Francis Acton, he is fled the field,  
 With him, all those that did partake his quarrel,  
 And I am left alone, with sorrow dumb,  
 And in my height of conquest, overcome.

Enter SUSAN

SUSAN Oh God, my brother wounded among the dead;  
 Unhappy jest that in such earnest ends.

28 trindle-tails: curly-tailed (and hence low-bred) dogs  
 32 swagger: bluster  
 37 long home: grave  
 5D *killing both* Q3 (killing one Q1)  
 44 innocent Q1; i.e. the soul. Some editors follow Q3's  
 'innocents', i.e. the slain men

The rumour of this fear stretched to my ears,  
 And I am come to know if you be wounded. 60  
 SIR CHARLES Oh sister, sister, wounded at the heart.  
 SUSAN My God forbid!  
 SIR CHARLES In doing that thing which he forbade,  
 I am wounded, sister.  
 SUSAN I hope not at the heart.  
 SIR CHARLES Yes, at the heart.  
 SUSAN Oh God! A surgeon there!  
 SIR CHARLES Call me a surgeon, sister, for my soul;  
 The sin of murder it hath pierced my heart,  
 And made a wide wound there; but for these  
 scratches,  
 They are nothing, nothing.  
 SUSAN Charles, what have you done?  
 Sir Francis hath great friends, and will pursue you 70  
 Unto the utmost danger of the law.  
 SIR CHARLES My conscience is become my enemy,  
 And will pursue me more than Acton can.  
 SUSAN Oh fly, sweet brother.  
 SIR CHARLES Shall I fly from thee?  
 What, Sue, art weary of my company?  
 SUSAN Fly from your foe.  
 SIR CHARLES You, sister, are my friend,  
 And flying you, I shall pursue my end.  
 SUSAN Your company is as my eyeball dear;  
 Being far from you, no comfort can be near.  
 Yet fly to save your life. What would I care 80  
 To spend my future age in black despair,  
 So you were safe? And yet to live one week  
 Without my brother Charles, through every cheek  
 My streaming tears would downwards run so rank  
 Till they could set on either side a bank,  
 And in the midst a channel; so my face  
 For two salt water brooks shall still find place.  
 SIR CHARLES Thou shalt not weep so much, for I will  
 stay  
 In spite of danger's teeth. I'll live with thee,  
 Or I'll not live at all. I will not sell 90  
 My country, and my father's patrimony,  
 No, thy sweet sight, for a vain hope of life.

Enter SHERIFF with OFFICERS

SHERIFF Sir Charles, I am made the unwilling  
 instrument  
 Of your attach and apprehension.  
 I am sorry that the blood of innocent men  
 Should be of you exacted. It was told me

59 fear: event to be feared  
 71 danger: jurisdiction, penalty  
 75 What, Sue: eds (What *Iane* Q1; Why *Sue* Q3)  
 83 every: either  
 84 rank: profusely  
 87 still: always  
 94 attach: arrest

That you were guarded with a troop of friends,  
 And therefore I come armed.  
 SIR CHARLES O Master Sheriff,  
 I came into the field with many friends,  
 But see, they all have left me; only one  
 Clings to my sad misfortune, my dear sister.  
 I know you for an honest gentleman;  
 I yield my weapons and submit to you.  
 Convey me where you please.  
 SHERIFF To prison then,  
 To answer for the lives of these dead men.  
 SUSAN O God! O God!  
 SIR CHARLES Sweet sister, every strain  
 Of sorrow from your heart augments my pain;  
 Your grief abounds and hits against my breast.  
 SHERIFF Sir, will you go?  
 SIR CHARLES Even where it likes you best.

100  
 Exit

Scene iv

Enter MASTER FRANKFORD in a study

FRANKFORD How happy am I amongst other men  
 That in my mean estate embrace content.  
 I am a gentleman, and by my birth  
 Companion with a king; a king's no more.  
 I am possessed of many fair revenues,  
 Sufficient to maintain a gentleman.  
 Touching my mind, I am studied in all arts,  
 The riches of my thoughts, and of my time  
 Have been a good proficient. But the chief  
 Of all the sweet felicities on earth,  
 I have a fair, a chaste, and loving wife,  
 Perfection all, all truth, all ornament.  
 If man on earth may truly happy be,  
 Of these at once possessed, sure I am he.

Enter NICK

NICK Sir, there's a gentleman attends without to speak  
 with you.  
 FRANKFORD On horseback?  
 NICK Ay, on horseback.  
 FRANKFORD Entreat him to alight; I will attend him.  
 Knowest thou him, Nick?  
 NICK I know him; his name's  
 Wendoll.  
 It seems he comes in haste. His horse is booted  
 Up to the flank in mire, himself all spotted

108 abounds: overflows  
 109 likes: pleases  
 SD in a study: in deep contemplation  
 2 mean: moderate  
 9 Have . . . proficient: have made profitable use  
 14 at once: at the same time

And stained with plashing. Sure he rid in fear  
 Or for a wager; horse and man both sweat.  
 I ne'er saw two in such a smoking heat.  
 FRANKFORD Intreat him in. About it instantly.  
 Exit NICK  
 This Wendoll I have noted, and his carriage  
 Hath pleased me much. By observation  
 I have noted many good deserts in him:  
 He's affable and seen in many things,  
 Discourses well, a good companion,  
 And though of small means, yet a gentleman  
 Of a good house, somewhat pressed by want.  
 I have preferred him to a second place  
 In my opinion, and my best regard.

Enter WENDOLL, ANNE, and NICK

ANNE O Master Frankford, Master Wendoll here  
 Brings you the strangest news that ere you heard.  
 FRANKFORD What news, sweet wife? What news good  
 Master Wendoll?  
 WENDOLL You knew the match made 'twixt Sir Francis  
 Acton  
 And Sir Charles Mountford?  
 FRANKFORD True, with their hounds  
 and hawks.  
 WENDOLL The matches were both played.  
 FRANKFORD Ha! And which won?  
 WENDOLL Sir Francis, your wife's brother, had the worst,  
 And lost the wager.  
 FRANKFORD Why, the worse his chance.  
 Perhaps the fortune of some other day  
 Will change his luck.  
 ANNE Oh, but you hear not all.  
 Sir Francis lost, and yet was loth to yield.  
 In brief, the two knights grew to difference,  
 From words to blows, and so to banding sides,  
 Where valorous Sir Charles slew in his spleen  
 Two of your brother's men: his falconer,  
 And his good huntsman, whom he loved so well.  
 More men were wounded, no more slain outright.  
 FRANKFORD Now, trust me, I am sorry for the knight.  
 But is my brother safe?  
 WENDOLL All whole and sound,  
 His body not being blemished with one wound.  
 But poor Sir Charles is to the prison led,  
 To answer at th'assize for them that's dead.  
 FRANKFORD I thank your pains, sir. Had the news been  
 better

23 plashing: splashing  
 27 carriage: conduct  
 29 deserts: qualities  
 30 seen: accomplished  
 34 preferred: promoted  
 second place: i.e. after that held by Anne  
 48 banding sides: 'forming factions' (Sturgess)

Your will was to have brought it, Master Wendoll.  
 Sir Charles will find hard friends; his case is heinous,  
 And will be most severely censured on. **61**  
 I am sorry for him. Sir, a word with you.  
 I know you, sir, to be a gentleman  
 In all things, your possibilities but mean.  
 Please you to use my table and my purse;  
 They are yours.

WENDOLL O Lord, sir, I shall never deserve it!  
 FRANKFORD O sir, disparage not your worth too much;  
 You are full of quality and fair desert.

Choose of my men which shall attend on you,  
 And he is yours. I will allow you, sir, **70**  
 Your man, your gelding, and your table,  
 All at my own charge. Be my companion.

WENDOLL Master Frankford, I have oft been bound to  
 you

By many favours; this exceeds them all  
 That I shall never merit your least favour.  
 But when your last remembrance I forget,  
 Heaven at my soul exact that weighty debt.

FRANKFORD There needs no protestation, for I know  
 you

Virtuous, and therefore grateful. Prithee Nan,  
 Use him with all thy loving'st courtesy. **80**

ANNE As far as modesty may well extend,  
 It is my duty to receive your friend.

FRANKFORD To dinner; come sir. From this present  
 day,

Welcome to me forever. Come away!

*Exeunt FRANKFORD, ANNE and WENDOLL*

NICK I do not like this fellow by no means;  
 I never see him but my heart still earns.  
 Zounds, I could fight with him, yet know not why;  
 The devil and he are all one in my eye.

*Enter JENKIN*

JENKIN O Nick, what gentleman is that comes to lie at  
 our house? My master allows him one to wait on  
 him, and I believe it will fall to thy lot. **91**

NICK I love my master, by these hilts I do,  
 But rather than I'll ever come to serve him,  
 I'll turn away my master.

*Enter SISLY*

SISLY Nich'las, where are you Nich'las? You must come  
 in, Nich'las, and help the young gentleman off with  
 his boots.

NICK If I pluck off his boots, I'll eat the spurs,  
 And they shall stick fast in my throat like burrs.

*Exit NICK*

SISLY Then Jenkin, come you? **100**

JENKIN 'Tis no boot for me to deny it. My master hath  
 given me a coat here, but he takes pains himself to  
 brush it once or twice a day with a holly wand.

SISLY Come, come, make haste, that you may wash  
 your hands again, and help to serve in dinner. *Exit*

JENKIN (*To audience*) You may see, my masters, though  
 it be afternoon with you, 'tis but early days with us,  
 for we have not dined yet. Stay but a little, I'll but go  
 in and help to bear up the first course and come to  
 you again presently. **110**

*Exit*

## Scene v

*Enter MALBY and CRANWELL*

MALBY This is the sessions day; pray, can you tell me  
 How young Sir Charles hath sped? Is he acquit,  
 Or must he try the law's strict penalty?

CRANWELL He's cleared of all, spite of his enemies,  
 Whose earnest labours was to take his life.  
 But in this suit of pardon he hath spent  
 All the revenues that his father left him,  
 And he is now turned a plain countryman,  
 Reformed in all things. See, sir, here he comes.

*Enter SIR CHARLES and his KEEPER*

KEEPER Discharge your fees and you are then at  
 freedom. **10**

SIR CHARLES Here, Master Keeper, take the poor  
 remainder

Of all the wealth I have. My heavy foes  
 Have made my purse light, but, alas, to me  
 'Tis wealth enough that you have set me free.

MALBY God give you joy of your delivery;

58-9 Had the news . . . it: 'i.e. You would have brought us  
 more pleasing news had you any choice in the matter'  
 (Scobie)

60 find hard friends: find friends with difficulty

64 possibilities: resources

75 That: so that

76 your last remembrance: 'i.e. this latest kindness' (Scobie)

86 earns: grieves; Scobie also notes a variant meaning of  
 'curdles'

87 Zounds: exclamation, from 'God's wounds'

92 hilts: i.e. of dagger

101 boot: avail (with pun)

102 coat: i.e. servant's livery

103 brush . . . holly wand: 'i.e. to give me a beating' (Scobie)

107-8 afternoon . . . dined yet: performances of plays began at  
 about 2.00 p.m.; the usual time for dinner was midday

3 try: undergo

6 of: for

8 a plain countryman: 'i.e. he is no longer a landlord'  
 (Scobie)

9 Reformed: changed

SD SIR CHARLES Q3 (SIR FRANCIS Q1)

I am glad to see you abroad, Sir Charles.  
 SIR CHARLES The poorest knight in England, Master  
 Malby;  
 My life hath cost me all the patrimony  
 My father left his son. Well, God forgive them  
 That are the authors of my penury. 20

Enter SHAFTON

SHAFTON Sir Charles, a hand, a hand—at liberty!  
 Now by the faith I owe, I am glad to see it.  
 What want you? Wherein may I pleasure you?  
 SIR CHARLES O me! O most unhappy gentleman!  
 I am not worthy to have friends stirred up  
 Whose hands may help me in this plunge of want.  
 I would I were in heaven to inherit there  
 Th'immortal birthright which my Saviour keeps,  
 And by no unthrift can be bought and sold;  
 For here on earth, what pleasures should we trust? 30

SHAFTON To rid you from these contemplations  
 Three hundred pounds you shall receive of me—  
 Nay, five for fail. Come sir, the sight of gold  
 Is the most sweet receipt for melancholy,  
 And will revive your spirits. You shall hold law  
 With your proud adversaries. Tush, let Frank Acton  
 Wage with knighthoodlike expense with me,  
 And he will sink, he will. Nay, good Sir Charles  
 Applaud your fortune, and your fair escape  
 From all these perils.

SIR CHARLES Oh sir, they have undone me. 40  
 Two thousand and five hundred pound a year  
 My father at his death possessed me of,  
 All which the envious Acton made me spend.  
 And notwithstanding all this large expense,  
 I had much ado to gain my liberty;  
 And I have now only a house of pleasure  
 With some five hundred pounds, reserved  
 Both to maintain me and my loving sister.

SHAFTON (*Aside*) That must I have; it lies convenient  
 for me.  
 If I can fasten but one finger on him, 50  
 With my full hand I'll gripe him to the heart.  
 'Tis not for love I proffered him this coin,

16 abroad: at liberty

22 owe: own

23 want: lack

26 plunge: crisis

33 for fail: to be on the safe side

34 receipt: recipe

35 hold law: engage in litigation

37 Wage: contend

46 house of pleasure: summer house

48 Both to maintain: to maintain both

51 gripe: to grip, clutch or seize; to seek to get hold of; also  
 'to oppress by miserly or penurious treatment; to "pinch",  
 "squeeze"' (OED)

But for my gain and pleasure. (*To SIR CHARLES*)  
 Come, Sir Charles,  
 I know you have need of money; take my offer.  
 SIR CHARLES Sir, I accept it, and remain indebted  
 Even to the best of my unable power.  
 Come, gentlemen, and see it tendered down. *Exeunt*

## Scene vi

Enter WENDOLL, *melancholy*

WENDOLL I am a villain if I apprehend  
 But such a thought; then, to attempt the deed—  
 Slave, thou art damned without redemption.  
 I'll drive away this passion with a song.  
 A song! Ha, ha! A song, as if, fond man,  
 Thy eyes could swim in laughter when thy soul  
 Lies drenched and drowned in red tears of blood.  
 I'll pray, and see if God within my heart  
 Plant better thoughts. Why, prayers are meditations,  
 And when I meditate—O God forgive me— 10  
 It is on her divine perfections.  
 I will forget her; I will arm myself  
 Not to entertain a thought of love to her;  
 And when I come by chance into her presence  
 I'll hale these balls until my eye-strings crack  
 From being pulled and drawn to look that way.

Enter over the stage FRANKFORD, ANNE, and NICK

O God! O God! With what a violence  
 I am hurried to my own destruction.  
 There goest thou, the most perfect'st man  
 That ever England bred a gentleman; 20  
 And shall I wrong his bed? Thou God of thunder,  
 Stay, in thy thoughts of vengeance and of wrath,  
 Thy great, almighty, and all-judging hand  
 From speedy execution on a villain,  
 A villain, and a traitor to his friend.

Enter JENKIN

JENKIN Did your worship call?  
 WENDOLL (*Not noticing JENKIN*) He doth maintain me,  
 he allows me largely  
 Money to spend—  
 JENKIN (*Aside*) By my faith, so do not you me, I cannot  
 get a cross of you. 30  
 WENDOLL My gelding and my man.

56 unable: feeble

57 tendered down: paid

1 apprehend: conceive

5 fond: foolish

15 balls: eyeballs

27 largely: generously

30 cross: a coin

JENKIN (*Aside*) That's Sorrel and I.  
 WENDOLL This kindness grows of no alliance 'twixt us.  
 JENKIN (*Aside*) Nor is my service of any great  
 acquaintance.  
 WENDOLL I never bound him to me by desert;  
 Of a mere stranger, a poor gentleman,  
 A man by whom in no kind he could gain,  
 He hath placed me in the height of all his thoughts,  
 Made me companion with the best and chiefest  
 In Yorkshire. He cannot eat without me, 40  
 Nor laugh without me; I am to his body  
 As necessary as his digestion,  
 And equally do make him whole or sick.  
 And shall I wrong this man? Base man! Ingrate!  
 Hast thou the power straight with thy gory hands  
 To rip thy image from his bleeding heart?  
 To scratch thy name from out the holy book  
 Of his remembrance, and to wound his name,  
 That holds thy name so dear, or rend his heart  
 To whom thy heart was joined and knit together? 50  
 And yet I must. Then, Wendoll, be content.  
 Thus villains, when they would, cannot repent.  
 JENKIN (*Aside*) What a strange humour is my new  
 master in. Pray God he be not mad. If he should be  
 so, I should never have any mind to serve him in  
 Bedlam. It may be he is mad for missing of me.  
 WENDOLL (*Seeing JENKIN*) What, Jenkin? Where's your  
 mistress?  
 JENKIN Is your worship married?  
 WENDOLL Why dost thou ask? 59  
 JENKIN Because you are my master, and if I have a  
 mistress, I would be glad like a good servant to do my  
 duty to her.  
 WENDOLL I mean where's Mistress Frankford?  
 JENKIN Marry, sir, her husband is riding out of town,  
 and she went very lovingly to bring him on his way to  
 horse. Do you see, sir, here she comes, and here I go.  
 WENDOLL Vanish. *Exit JENKIN*

*Enter ANNE*

ANNE You are well met, sir. Now in troth my husband  
 Before he took horse had a great desire  
 To speak with you. We sought about the house, 70  
 Hallowed into the fields, sent every way  
 But could not meet you. Therefore he enjoined me  
 To do unto you his most kind commends.

33 alliance: kinship  
 34 of . . . acquaintance: because of any close relationship  
 36 mere: complete  
 37 kind: way  
 45 straight: directly, immediately  
 47 name: reputation  
 56 Bedlam: famous London asylum for the insane  
 65-6 bring . . . horse: accompany him to his horse  
 73 do . . . commends: give you his kindest regards

Nay, more, he wills you as you prize his love,  
 Or hold in estimation his kind friendship,  
 To make bold in his absence and command  
 Even as himself were present in the house,  
 For you must keep his table, use his servants,  
 And be a present Frankford in his absence.  
 WENDOLL I thank him for his love. 80  
 (*Aside*) Give me a name, you whose infectious  
 tongues  
 Are tipped with gall and poison; as you would  
 Think on a man that had your father slain,  
 Murdered thy children, made your wives base  
 strumpets,  
 So call me, call me so! Print in my face  
 The most stigmatic title of a villain  
 For hatching treason to so true a friend.  
 ANNE Sir, you are much beholding to my husband.  
 You are a man most dear in his regard. 89  
 WENDOLL I am bound unto your husband and you too.  
 (*Aside*) I will not speak to wrong a gentleman  
 Of that good estimation, my kind friend.  
 I will not! Zounds, I will not! I may choose,  
 And I will choose. Shall I be so misled?  
 Or shall I purchase to my father's crest  
 The motto of a villain? If I say  
 I will not do it, what thing can enforce me?  
 Who can compel me? What sad destiny  
 Hath such command upon my yielding thoughts?  
 I will not. Ha! Some fury pricks me on; 100  
 The swift fates drag me at their chariot wheel,  
 And hurry me to mischief. Speak I must—  
 Injure myself, wrong her, deceive his trust.  
 ANNE Are you not well, sir, that you seem thus troubled?  
 There is sedition in your countenance.  
 WENDOLL And in my heart, fair angel, chaste and wise.  
 I love you. Start not, speak not, answer not.  
 I love you—nay, let me speak the rest.  
 Bid me to swear, and I will call to record  
 The host of heaven.  
 ANNE The host of heaven forbid 110  
 Wendoll should hatch such a disloyal thought.  
 WENDOLL Such is my fate; to this suit I was born:  
 To wear rich pleasure's crown, or fortune's scorn.  
 ANNE My husband loves you.  
 WENDOLL I know it.  
 ANNE He esteems you  
 Even as his brain, his eye-ball, or his heart.  
 WENDOLL I have tried it.

78 keep: maintain  
 86 stigmatic: infamous  
 98 sad: distressing  
 105 sedition: tumult, discord (not in OED in this figurative  
 sense)  
 116 tried it: put it to the test

ANNE His purse is your exchequer, and his table  
Doth freely serve you.

WENDOLL So I have found it.

ANNE O with what face of brass, what brow of steel,  
Can you unblushing speak this to the face  
Of the espoused wife of so dear a friend?  
It is my husband that maintains your state;  
Will you dishonour him? I am his wife  
That in your power hath left his whole affairs;  
It is to me you speak?

WENDOLL O speak no more,  
For more than this I know and have recorded  
Within the red-leaved table of my heart.  
Fair, and of all beloved, I was not fearful  
Bluntly to give my life into your hand,  
And at one hazard all my earthly means.  
Go, tell your husband; he will turn me off,  
And I am then undone. I care not, I—  
'Twas for your sake. Perchance in rage he'll kill me.  
I care not—'twas for you. Say I incur  
The general name of villain through the world,  
Of traitor to my friend—I care not, I.  
Beggary, shame, death, scandal, and reproach:  
For you I'll hazard all—what care I?  
For you I'll live, and in your love I'll die.

ANNE You move me, sir, to passion and to pity.  
The love I bear my husband is as precious  
As my soul's health.

WENDOLL I love your husband too,  
And for his love I will engage my life.  
Mistake me not, the augmentation  
Of my sincere affection borne to you  
Doth no whit lessen my regard of him.  
I will be secret, lady, close as night,  
And not the light of one small glorious star  
Shall shine here in my forehead to bewray  
That act of night.

ANNE What shall I say?  
My soul is wandering, and hath lost her way.  
O Master Wendoll, O.

WENDOLL Sigh not, sweet saint,  
For every sigh you breathe draws from my heart  
A drop of blood.

ANNE I ne'er offended yet.  
My fault, I fear, will in my brow be writ.  
Women that fall not quite bereft of grace  
Have their offences noted in their face.

127 table: notebook

130 at one hazard: 'at once put at risk' (Scobie)

140 passion: sorrow (Sturgess)

147 close: secret

148 glorious: boastful

149 bewray: divulge, betray

153-4 every sigh . . . blood: reference to the popular belief that  
a sigh cost one's heart a drop of blood

I blush and am ashamed. O Master Wendoll,  
Pray God I be not born to curse your tongue  
That hath enchanted me. This maze I am in  
I fear will prove the labyrinth of sin. 160

Enter NICK *unobserved*

WENDOLL The path of pleasure, and the gate to bliss,  
Which on your lips I knock at with a kiss.

NICK (*Aside*) I'll kill the rogue.

WENDOLL Your husband is from home, your bed's no  
blab—  
Nay, look not down and blush.

*Exeunt ANNE and WENDOLL*

NICK Zounds, I'll stab.

130 Ay, Nick, was it thy chance to come just in the nick?

I love my master, and I hate that slave;

I love my mistress, but these tricks I like not.

My master shall not pocket up this wrong; 170

I'll eat my fingers first. What sayest thou, metal?

*Drawing his dagger*

Does not the rascal Wendoll go on legs  
That thou must cut off? Hath he not hamstrings  
That thou must hough? Nay metal, thou shalt stand  
To all I say. I'll henceforth turn a spy,  
And watch them in their close conveyances.

I never looked for better of that rascal

Since he came miching first into our house.

It is that Satan hath corrupted her,

For she was fair and chaste. I'll have an eye 180

In all their gestures. Thus I think of them:

If they proceed as they have done before,

Wendoll's a knave, my mistress is a etcetera.

*Exit*

## Scene vii

Enter CHARLES and SUSAN

150 SIR CHARLES Sister, you see we are driven to hard shift

To keep this poor house we have left unsold.

I am now enforced to follow husbandry,

And you to milk; and do we not live well?

Well, I thank God.

SUSAN O brother, here's a change  
Since old Sir Charles died in our father's house.

160 maze: a) state of bewilderment; b) labyrinth

165 blab: tell-tale

170 pocket up: submit to

174 hough: cut (to disable)

176 close conveyances: secret dealings

178 miching: sneaking

181 gestures: actions

183 etcetera Q1 (— Q3); i.e. 'whore'

1 hard shift: a difficult way of earning a living

3 husbandry: i.e. farming

SIR CHARLES All things on earth thus change, some up,  
some down;  
Content's a kingdom, and I wear that crown.

*Enter* SHAFTON *with a* SERGEANT

SHAFTON Good morrow, good morrow, Sir Charles.  
What, with your sister  
Plying your husbandry? Sergeant, stand off. 10  
You have a pretty house here, and a garden,  
And goodly ground about it. Since it lies  
So near a lordship that I lately bought,  
I would fain buy it of you. I will give you—

SIR CHARLES O pardon me; this house successively  
Hath 'longed to me and my progenitors  
Three hundred year. My great-great-grandfather,  
He in whom first our gentle style began,  
Dwelt here, and in this ground increased this molehill  
Unto that mountain which my father left me. 20  
Where he the first of all our house begun,  
I now the last will end and keep this house,  
This virgin title never yet deflowered  
By any unthrift of the Mountford's line.  
In brief I will not sell it for more gold  
Than you could hide or pave the ground withal.

SHAFTON Ha, ha! A proud mind and a beggar's purse.  
Where's my three hundred pounds, beside the use?  
I have brought it to an execution  
By course of law. What? Is my money ready? 30

SIR CHARLES An execution sir, and never tell me  
You put my bond in suit? You deal extremely.

SHAFTON Sell me the land and I'll acquit you straight.

SIR CHARLES Alas, alas! 'Tis all trouble hath left me  
To cherish me and my poor sister's life.  
If this were sold our names should then be quite  
Razed from the bead-roll of gentility.  
You see what hard shift we have made to keep it  
Allied still to our own name. This palm you see  
Labour hath glowed within; her silver brow, 40  
That never tasted a rough winter's blast  
Without a mask or fan, doth with a grace  
Defy cold winter and his storms outface.

SUSAN Sir, we feed sparing and we labour hard,

We lie uneasy, to reserve to us  
And our succession this small plot of ground.  
SIR CHARLES I have so bent my thoughts to husbandry,  
That I protest I scarcely can remember  
What a new fashion is, how silk or satin  
Feels in my hand. Why, pride is grown to us 50  
A mere, mere stranger. I have quite forgot  
The names of all that ever waited on me;  
I cannot name ye any of my hounds,  
Once from whose echoing mouths I heard all the  
music

That e'er my heart desired. What should I say?  
To keep this place I have changed myself away.  
SHAFTON Arrest him at my suit. Actions and actions  
Shall keep thee in perpetual bondage fast.  
Nay, more, I'll sue thee by a late appeal,  
And call thy former life in question. 60

The keeper is my friend; thou shalt have irons  
And usage such as I'll deny to dogs. Away with him!

SIR CHARLES You are too timorous; but trouble is my  
master

And I will serve him truly. My kind sister,  
Thy tears are of no force to mollify  
This flinty man. Go to my father's brother,  
My kinsmen and allies; entreat them from me  
To ransom me from this injurious man  
That seeks my ruin.

SHAFTON Come, irons, irons away!  
I'll see thee lodged far from the sight of day. 70

*Exeunt except* SUSAN

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS *and* MALBY

SUSAN My heart's so hardened with the frost of grief  
Death cannot pierce it through. Tyrant too fell!  
So lead the fiends condemned souls to hell.

SIR FRANCIS Again to prison! Malby, hast thou seen  
A poor slave better tortured? Shall we hear  
The music of his voice cry from the grate  
'Meat for the Lord's sake'? No, no, yet I am not  
Thoroughly revenged. They say he hath a pretty wench  
Unto his sister: shall I, in mercy sake  
To him and to his kindred, bribe the fool 80  
To shame herself by lewd, dishonest lust?

SD SERGEANT: officer charged with arresting offenders and  
summoning them to court

13 lordship: estate

18 gentle style: title to gentility

28 use: interest

29 have . . . execution: 'have had prepared a warrant of  
seizure' (Sturgess)

32 put . . . suit: 'set the law in motion concerning my bond'  
(Scobie)

extremely: severely

36 names: eds (means Qs)

37 bead-roll: list

40 her: i.e. Susan's

46 succession: descendants

51 mere: absolute

56 changed . . . away: 'transformed my way of life'  
(Sturgess)

57 actions: i.e. legal actions

60 former life: 'i.e. judgement which had granted him his  
life' (Sturgess)

63 timorous: terrible, dreadful

67 allies: relatives

72 fell: cruel

76 grate: prison bars

81 dishonest: dishonourable

I'll proffer largely, but the deed being done  
 I'll smile to see her base confusion.

MALBY Methinks, Sir Francis, you are full revenged  
 For greater wrongs than he can proffer you.  
 See where the poor sad gentlewoman stands.

SIR FRANCIS Ha, ha! Now I will flout her poverty,  
 Deride her fortunes, scoff her base estate.  
 My very soul the name of Mountford hates.  
 But stay, my heart! O what a look did fly 90  
 To strike my soul through with thy piercing eye.  
 I am enchanted, all my spirits are fled,  
 And with one glance my envious spleen struck dead.

SUSAN (*Seeing them*) Acton, that seeks our blood!  
*Runs away*

SIR FRANCIS O chaste and fair!

MALBY Sir Francis, why Sir Francis? Zounds, in a trance!  
 Sir Francis, what cheer, man? Come, come, how is't?

SIR FRANCIS Was she not fair? Or else this judging eye  
 Cannot distinguish beauty.

MALBY She was fair.

SIR FRANCIS She was an angel in a mortal's shape,  
 And ne'er descended from old Mountford's line. 100  
 But soft, soft, let me call my wits together.  
 A poor, poor wench, to my great adversary  
 Sister, whose very souls denounce stern war  
 One against other. How now, Frank, turned fool  
 Or madman, whether? But no! Master of  
 My perfect senses and directest wits.  
 Then why should I be in this violent humour  
 Of passion and of love, and with a person  
 So different every way, and so opposed  
 In all contractions and still warring actions? 110  
 Fie, fie, how I dispute against my soul.  
 Come, come, I'll gain her, or in her fair quest  
 Purchase my soul free and immortal rest.

*Exeunt*

## Scene viii

*Enter THREE or FOUR SERVINGMEN including NICK and SPIGGOT the Butler, one with a voider and a wooden knife to take away all, another the salt and bread; another the*

82 largely: generously  
 83 base confusion: degrading ruin  
 90 O: eds (or Qs)  
 92 spirits: source of hostile feelings  
 93 envious spleen: malicious anger  
 103 whose very souls: i.e. Mountford's and mine  
 denounce: announce  
 105 whether?: which?  
 110 contractions: dealings  
 112 her fair quest: 'quest of fair her' (Van Fossen). Sturges  
 suggests 'fair quest of her'

*table-cloth and napkins, another the carpet. JENKIN with two lights after them*

JENKIN So, march in order and retire in battle 'ray. My  
 master and the guests have supped already; all's taken  
 away. Here, now spread for the servingmen in the  
 hall. Butler, it belongs to your office.

SPIGGOT I know it, Jenkin. What do you call the  
 gentleman that supped there tonight?

JENKIN Who, my master?

SPIGGOT No, no, Master Wendoll, he is a daily guest. I  
 mean the gentleman that came but this afternoon. 9  
 JENKIN His name is Master Cranwell. God's light!  
 Hark within there, my master calls to lay more billets  
 on the fire. Come, come! Lord, how we that are in  
 office here in the house are troubled. One spread the  
 carpet in the parlour and stand ready to snuff the  
 lights; the rest be ready to prepare their stomachs.  
 More lights in the hall there! Come Nich'las.

*Exeunt all but NICK*

NICK I cannot eat, but had I Wendoll's heart  
 I would eat that; the rogue grows impudent.  
 Oh I have seen such vild, notorious tricks,  
 Ready to make my eyes dart from my head. 20  
 I'll tell my master, by this air I will;  
 Fall what may fall, I'll tell him. Here he comes.

*Enter FRANKFORD, as it were brushing the crumbs from his clothes with a napkin, and newly risen from supper*

FRANKFORD Nich'las, what make you here? Why are  
 not you  
 At supper in the hall there with your fellows?

NICK Master, I stayed your rising from the board  
 To speak with you.

FRANKFORD Be brief then, gentle Nich'las,  
 My wife and guests attend me in the parlour.  
 Why dost thou pause? Now Nich'las, you want  
 money,  
 And unthrift-like would eat into your wages  
 Ere you have earned it. Here's, sir, half-a-crown. 30  
 Play the good husband and away to supper.

NICK (*Aside*) By this hand, an honourable gentleman. I  
 will not see him wronged. (*To FRANKFORD*) Sir, I  
 have served you long. You entertained me seven years  
 before your beard. You knew me, sir, before you  
 knew my mistress.

SD *voider*: tray or basket for clearing the table  
*carpet*: table cover  
 11 billets: thick pieces of wood  
 13 office: service  
 19 vild: vile  
 25 stayed: awaited  
 28 want: lack  
 31 Play the good husband: i.e. be thrifty  
 34 entertained: employed



FRANKFORD What of this, good Nich'las?  
 NICK I never was a makebate or a knave.  
 I have no fault but one—I am given to quarrel,  
 But not with women. I will tell you, master, 40  
 That which will make your heart leap from your  
 breast,  
 Your hair to startle from your head, your ears to  
 tingle.  
 FRANKFORD What preparation's this to dismal news?  
 NICK 'Sblood sir, I love you better than your wife.  
 I'll make it good.  
 FRANKFORD Thou art a knave, and I have much ado  
 With wonted patience to contain my rage  
 And not to break thy pate. Thou art a knave;  
 I'll turn you with your base comparisons  
 Out of my doors. 50  
 NICK Do, do.  
 There's not room for Wendoll and me too  
 Both in one house. O master, master,  
 That Wendoll is a villain.  
 FRANKFORD Ay, saucy! FRANKFORD *strikes him*  
 NICK Strike, strike, do strike, yet hear me. I am no fool,  
 I know a villain when I see him act  
 Deeds of a villain. Master, master, that base slave  
 Enjoys my mistress, and dishonours you.  
 FRANKFORD Thou hast killed me with a weapon whose  
 sharpened point 60  
 Hath pricked quite through and through my  
 shivering heart.  
 Drops of cold sweat sit dangling on my hairs  
 Like morning's dew upon the golden flowers,  
 And I am plunged into a strange agony.  
 What didst thou say? If any word that touched  
 His credit or her reputation,  
 It is as hard to enter my belief  
 As Dives into heaven.  
 NICK I can gain nothing.  
 They are two that never wronged me. I knew before  
 'Twas but a thankless office, and perhaps 70  
 As much as my service or my life is worth.  
 All this I know, but this and more,  
 More by a thousand dangers could not hire me  
 To smother such a heinous wrong from you.  
 I saw, and I have said.  
 FRANKFORD (*Aside*) 'Tis probable. Though blunt, yet  
 he is honest.  
 Though I durst pawn my life, and on their faith  
 Hazard the dear salvation of my soul,

38 makebate: trouble-maker  
 45 I'll make it good: i.e. I'll justify my words. Van Fossen  
 suggests that Frankford is threatening Nicholas at this  
 point  
 59 enjoys: i.e. sexually  
 66 credit: reputation  
 68 Dives: the rich man sent to hell in the parable in Luke 16

Yet in my trust I may be too secure.  
 May this be true? O may it? Can it be? 80  
 Is it by any wonder possible?  
 Man, woman, what thing mortal may we trust,  
 When friends and bosom wives prove so unjust?  
 (*To NICK*) What instance hast thou of this strange  
 report?  
 NICK Eyes, eyes.  
 FRANKFORD Thy eyes may be deceived I tell thee,  
 For should an angel from the heavens drop down  
 And preach this to me that thyself hast told,  
 He should have much ado to win belief,  
 In both their loves I am so confident. 90  
 NICK Shall I discourse the same by circumstance?  
 FRANKFORD No more; to supper, and command your  
 fellows  
 To attend us and the strangers. Not a word;  
 I charge thee on thy life, be secret then,  
 For I know nothing.  
 NICK I am dumb. And now that I have eased my  
 stomach,  
 I will go fill my stomach. *Exit*  
 FRANKFORD Away, be gone.  
 She is well born, descended nobly,  
 Virtuous her education; her repute 100  
 Is in the general voice of all the country  
 Honest and fair; her carriage, her demeanour  
 In all her actions that concern the love  
 To me, her husband, modest, chaste, and godly.  
 Is all this seeming gold plain copper?  
 But he, that Judas that hath borne my purse,  
 And sold me for a sin—O God, O God,  
 Shall I put up these wrongs? No, shall I trust  
 The bare report of this suspicious groom  
 Before the double gilt, the well-hatched ore 110  
 Of their two hearts? No, I will loose these thoughts.  
 Distraction I will banish from my brow,  
 And from my looks exile sad discontent,  
 Their wonted favours in my tongue shall flow.  
 Till I know all, I'll nothing seem to know.  
 Lights and a table there! Wife, Master Wendoll  
 And gentle Master Cranwell—

*Enter ANNE, MASTER WENDOLL, MASTER CRANWELL,  
 NICK and JENKIN with cards, carpet, stools and other  
 necessaries*

FRANKFORD O you are a stranger, Master Cranwell,  
 you,

84 instance: evidence  
 91 discourse . . . circumstance: relate this story in detail  
 93 strangers: visitors  
 96 eased my stomach: i.e. 'got it off my chest'  
 108 put up: put up with  
 110 double gilt: a) refined gold; b) double guilt  
 well-hatched: richly inlaid

And often balk my house; faith, you are a churl.  
 Now we have supped, a table and to cards. **120**  
 JENKIN A pair of cards, Nich'las, and a carpet to cover  
 the table. Where's Sisly with her counters and her  
 box? Candles and candlesticks there!

*Enter SISLY and a SERVINGMAN, with counters and  
 candles*

Fie, we have such a household of serving creatures!  
 Unless it be Nick and I, there's not one amongst  
 them all can say boo to a goose. Well said, Nick.

*They spread a carpet, set down lights and cards*

ANNE Come Master Frankford, who shall take my  
 part?

FRANKFORD Marry, that will I, sweet wife.

WENDOLL No, by my faith, sir, when you are together I  
 sit out; it must be Mistress Frankford and I, or else it  
 is no match. **131**

FRANKFORD I do not like that match.

NICK *(Aside)* You have no reason, marry, knowing all.

FRANKFORD 'Tis no great matter neither. Come,  
 Master Cranwell, shall you and I take them up?

CRANWELL At your pleasure, sir.

FRANKFORD I must look to you, Master Wendoll, for  
 you will be playing false—nay, so will my wife too.

NICK *(Aside)* Ay, I will be sworn she will.

ANNE Let them that are taken playing false forfeit the  
 set. **140**

FRANKFORD Content. It shall go hard but I'll take you.

CRANWELL Gentlemen, what shall our game be?

WENDOLL Master Frankford, you play best at Noddy.

FRANKFORD You shall not find it so; indeed you shall  
 not.

ANNE I can play at nothing so well as Double Ruff.

FRANKFORD If Master Wendoll and my wife be  
 together, there's no playing against them at double  
 hand.

NICK I can tell you, sir, the game that Master Wendoll  
 is best at. **150**

WENDOLL What game is that, Nick?

NICK Marry sir, Knave Out of Doors.

WENDOLL She and I will take you at Lodam.

119 balk: avoid

121 pair: pack

127 take my part: be my partner

138 playing false: cheating a) at cards, and b) with my wife.  
 These kinds of double meanings are to be found in  
 practically all the exchanges that follow

140 set: game

143 Noddy: a) card game; b) fool

145 Double Ruff: a) card game, like whist; b) *double* also  
 meant deceitful, and *ruff* meant excitement, passion

149–9 double hand: 'i.e. a) when they are partners in a card  
 game, b) at duplicity' (Scobie)

152 Knave Out of Doors: card game (with innuendo)

ANNE Husband, shall we play at Saint?

FRANKFORD *(Aside)* My saint's turned devil. *(To them)*

No, we'll none of Saint. You're best at New Cut,  
 wife; you'll play at that.

WENDOLL If you play at New Cut, I am soonest hitter  
 of any here, for a wager.

FRANKFORD *(Aside)* 'Tis me they play on; well, you may  
 draw out, **160**

For all your cunning; 'twill be to your shame.

I'll teach you at your New Cut a new game.

*(To them)* Come, come.

CRANWELL If you cannot agree upon the game, to Post  
 and Pair.

WENDOLL We shall be soonest pairs, and my good  
 host,

When he comes late home, he must kiss the post.

FRANKFORD Whoever wins, it shall be to thy cost.

CRANWELL Faith, let it be Vide-ruff, and let's make  
 honours.

FRANKFORD If you make honours, one thing let me  
 crave,

Honour the King, and Queen; except the knave. **170**

WENDOLL Well, as you please for that. Lift who shall  
 deal.

ANNE The least in sight. What are you, Master  
 Wendoll?

WENDOLL *(Cutting the cards)* I am a knave.

NICK *(Aside)* I'll swear it.

ANNE I a queen.

FRANKFORD *(Aside)* A quean thou should'st say. *(To  
 them)* Well, the cards are mine.

They are the grossest pair that e'er I felt.

ANNE Shuffle, I'll cut. *(Aside)* Would I had never dealt.

*FRANKFORD deals the cards*

FRANKFORD I have lost my dealing.

WENDOLL Sir, the fault's in me.

This queen I have more than my own, you see.

Give me the stock. *WENDOLL deals*

153, 154 Lodam, Saint: card games

156 New Cut: card game (with sexual implication; 'cut' was  
 an opprobrious term used for a man or woman)

158 hitter: obscure; probably 'point-scorer'

160 draw out: 'i.e. so pick your cards as to lose the game'  
 (Van Fossen)

164 Post and Pair: a betting game, played with three cards  
 each

166 kiss the post: be disappointed, excluded

168 Vide-ruff: another variant of Ruff

make honours: probably 'name the highest cards' (eds)

171 Lift . . . deal: cut for the deal (with *double entendre* on  
 'deal': see l. 176 below)

172 least: lowest

174 quean: harlot

175 grossest pair: 'a) thickest pack; b) most immoral couple'  
 (Van Fossen)

179 stock: cards not yet dealt

FRANKFORD My mind's not on my game.  
*(Aside)* Many a deal I have lost, the more's your shame.  
*(To him)* You have served me a bad trick, Master Wendoll.  
 WENDOLL Sir, you must take your lot. To end this strife,  
 I know I have dealt better with your wife.  
 FRANKFORD *(Aside)* Thou hast dealt falsely then.  
 ANNE What's trumps?  
 WENDOLL Hearts. Partner, I rub.  
 FRANKFORD *(Aside)* Thou robb'st me of my soul, of her chaste love;  
 In thy false dealing, thou hast robbed my heart.  
 Booty you play; I like a loser stand,  
 Having no heart, or here, or in my hand.  
*(To them)* I will give o'er the set; I am not well.  
 Come, who will hold my cards?  
 ANNE Not well, sweet Master Frankford?  
 Alas, what ail you? 'Tis some sudden qualm.  
 WENDOLL How long have you been so, Master Frankford?  
 FRANKFORD Sir, I was lusty, and I had my health,  
 But I grew ill when you began to deal.  
 Take hence this table.

*Enter SERVANTS to remove the table, cards, etc.*

Gentle Master Cranwell,  
 You are welcome; see your chamber at your pleasure.  
 I am sorry that this megrim takes me so, 200  
 I cannot sit and bear you company.  
 Jenkin, some lights, and show him to his chamber.  
 ANNE A night gown for my husband quickly there.

*Enter SERVANT with nightgown, and exit*

It is some rheum or cold.  
 WENDOLL Now, in good faith,  
 This illness you have got by sitting late  
 Without your gown.  
 FRANKFORD I know it, Master Wendoll.  
 Go, go, to bed, lest you complain like me.  
 Wife, prithee wife, into my bed-chamber.  
 The night is raw and cold and rheumatic. 209  
 Leave me my gown and light; I'll walk away my fit.  
 WENDOLL Sweet sir, good night. *Exit* WENDOLL

181 trick: a) hand of cards; b) piece of roguery  
 186 rub: take all the cards of one suit  
 189 Booty you play: i.e. you play falsely. 'To play booty' is to play badly with the intention of losing, in order to victimise another player  
 190 or . . . or: either . . . or  
 196 lusty: healthy  
 200 megrim: migraine  
 204 rheum: cold, catarrh  
 209 rheumatic: rheum-inducing

FRANKFORD Myself, good night.  
 ANNE Shall I attend you, husband?  
 FRANKFORD No, gentle wife, thou'lt catch cold in thy head.  
 Prithee begone, sweet; I'll make haste to bed.  
 ANNE No sleep will fasten on mine eyes, you know,  
 Until you come.  
 FRANKFORD Sweet Nan, I prithee go. *Exit* ANNE  
*(To NICK)* I have bethought me. Get me by degrees  
 The keys of all my doors, which I will mould  
 In wax, and take their fair impression, 219  
 To have by them new keys. This being compassed,  
 At a set hour a letter shall be brought me,  
 And when they think they may securely play,  
 They are nearest to danger. Nick, I must rely  
 Upon thy trust and faithful secrecy.  
 NICK Build on my faith.  
 FRANKFORD To bed then, not to rest.  
 Care lodges in my brain, grief in my breast.

*Exeunt*

## Scene ix

*Enter SUSAN, OLD MOUNTFORD, SANDY, RODER and TYDY*

OLD MOUNTFORD You say my nephew is in great distress;  
 Who brought it to him but his own lewd life?  
 I cannot spare a cross. I must confess  
 He was my brother's son; why, niece, what then?  
 This is no world in which to pity men.  
 SUSAN I was not born a begger, though his extremes  
 Enforce this language from me; I protest  
 No fortune of mine own could lead my tongue  
 To this base key. I do beseech you, uncle,  
 For the name's sake, for Christianity, 10  
 Nay, for God's sake, to pity his distress.  
 He is denied the freedom of the prison,  
 And in the hole is laid with men condemned.  
 Plenty he hath of nothing but of irons,  
 And it remains in you to free him thence.  
 OLD MOUNTFORD Money I cannot spare. Men should  
 take heed.  
 He lost my kindred when he fell to need. *Exit*  
 SUSAN Gold is but earth; thou earth enough shalt have  
 When thou hast once took measure of thy grave.  
 You know me, Master Sandy, and my suit. 20

212 Myself: 'i.e. my intimate friend' (Scobie)  
 217 by degrees: gradually  
 220 compassed: achieved  
 2 lewd: wicked  
 3 cross: coin  
 10 the name's sake: the sake of the family reputation  
 13 hole: dungeon

SANDY I knew you, lady, when the old man lived;  
I knew you ere your brother sold his land.  
Then you were Mistress Sue, tricked up in jewels;  
Then you sung well, played sweetly on the flute;  
But now I neither know you nor your suit. *Exit*

SUSAN You, Master Roder, was my brother's tenant.  
Rent-free he placed you in that wealthy farm  
Of which you are possessed.

RODER True he did,  
And have I not there dwelt still for his sake?  
I have some business now, but without doubt 30  
They that have hurled him in will help him out. *Exit*

SUSAN Cold comfort still. What say you, cousin Tydy?

TYDY I say this comes of roisting, swaggering.  
Call me not cousin; each man for himself.  
Some men are born to mirth and some to sorrow.  
I am no cousin unto them that borrow. *Exit*

SUSAN O Charity, why art thou fled to heaven,  
And left all things on this earth uneven?  
Their scoffing answers I will ne'er return,  
But to myself his grief in silence mourn. 40

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS and MALBY

SIR FRANCIS She is poor; I'll therefore tempt her with  
this gold.

Go, Malby, in my name deliver it,  
And I will stay thy answer.

MALBY Fair Mistress, as I understand, your grief  
Doth grow from want, so I have here in store  
A means to furnish you, a bag of gold  
Which to your hands I freely tender you.

SUSAN I thank you, heavens, I thank you, gentle sir.  
God make me able to requite this favour.

MALBY This gold Sir Francis Acton sends by me, 50  
And prays you— *whispering*

SUSAN Acton! O God, that name I am born to curse.  
Hence, bawd! Hence, broker! See, I spurn his gold;  
My honour never shall for gain be sold.

SIR FRANCIS Stay, lady, stay.

SUSAN From you I'll posting hie,  
Even as the doves from feathered eagles fly. *Exit*

SIR FRANCIS She hates my name, my face; how should  
I woo?

I am disgraced in everything I do.  
The more she hates me and disdains my love,  
The more I am wrapped in admiration 60

Of her divine and chaste perfections.  
Woo her with gifts I cannot, for all gifts  
Sent in my name she spurns. With looks I cannot,  
For she abhors my sight. Nor yet with letters,  
For none she will receive. How then, how then?  
Well, I will fasten such a kindness on her  
As shall o'ercome her hate and conquer it.  
Sir Charles, her brother, lies in execution  
For a great sum of money, and besides,  
The appeal is sued still for my huntsmen's death, 70  
Which only I have power to reverse.  
In her I'll bury all my hate of him.  
Go seek the keeper, Malby, bring me to him.  
To save his body, I his debts will pay;  
To save his life, I his appeal will stay.

*Exeunt*

## Scenex

*Enter* SIR CHARLES in prison, with irons, his feet bare, his  
garments all ragged and torn

SIR CHARLES Of all on the earth's face most miserable,  
Breathe in the hellish dungeon thy laments.  
Thus like a slave ragged, like a felon gyved,  
That hurls thee headlong to this base estate.  
O unkind uncle! O my friends ingrate!  
Unthankful kinsmen! Mountfords all too base,  
To let thy name lie fettered in disgrace.  
A thousand deaths here in this grave I die;  
Fear, hunger, sorrow, cold—all threat my death,  
And join together to deprive my breath. 10  
But that which most torments me, my dear sister  
Hath left to visit me, and from my friends  
Hath brought no hopeful answer; therefore I  
Divine they will not help my misery.  
If it be so, shame, scandal, and contempt  
Attend their covetous thoughts, need make their  
graves.  
Usurers they live, and may they die like slaves.

*Enter* KEEPER

KEEPER Knight, be of comfort for I bring thee freedom  
From all thy troubles.

SIR CHARLES Then I am doomed to die;  
Death is the end of all calamity. 20

33 roisting: revelling

38 uneven: unjust

39 return: 'either a) report (to Charles) or b) reply to, respond to' (Scobie)

43 stay: await

45 in store: in abundance

SD *whispering*: eds (&c. Qs)

53 broker: procurer

55 posting: hurriedly

68 in execution: imprisoned following his failure to pay his debt

70 appeal is sued: 'prosecution is in hand' (Sturgess)

3 gyved: shackled

4 That: Qs. Verity and Sturgess suggest 'what' in its place, changing the line to a question

5 ingrate: ungrateful

10 deprive: deprive me of

12 left: ceased

KEEPER Live! Your appeal is stayed, the execution  
Of all your debts discharged, your creditors  
Even to the utmost penny satisfied,  
In sign whereof your shackles I knock off.  
You are not left so much indebted to us  
As for your fees; all is discharged, all paid.  
Go freely to your house, or where you please.  
After long miseries, embrace your ease.

SIR CHARLES Thou grumblest out the sweetest music to  
me  
That ever organ played. Is this a dream? 30  
Or do my waking senses apprehend  
The pleasing taste of these applausive news?  
Slave that I was to wrong such honest friends,  
My loving kinsmen and my near allies.  
Tongue I will bite thee for the scandal breath  
Against such faithful kinsmen. They are all  
Composed of pity and compassion,  
Of melting charity, and of moving ruth.  
That which I spake before was in my rage;  
They are my friends, the mirrors of this age, 40  
Bounteous and free. The noble Mountfords' race,  
Ne'er bred a covetous thought or humour base.

Enter SUSAN

SUSAN I can no longer stay from visiting  
My woeful brother. While I could I kept  
My hapless tidings from his hopeful ear.

SIR CHARLES Sister, how much am I indebted to thee  
And to thy travail.

SUSAN What, at liberty?

SIR CHARLES Thou seest I am, thanks to thy industry.  
O unto which of all my courteous friends  
Am I thus bound? My uncle Mountford, he 50  
Even of an infant loved me; was it he?  
So did my cousin Tydy; was it he?  
So Master Roder, Master Sandy too;  
Which of all these did this high kindness do?

SUSAN Charles, can you mock me in your poverty,  
Knowing your friends deride your misery?  
Now I protest I stand so much amazed  
To see your bonds free and your irons knocked off  
That I am rapt into a maze of wonder, 60  
The rather for I know not by what means  
This happiness hath chanced.

SIR CHARLES Why, by my uncle,  
My cousins, and my friends; who else, I pray,  
Would take upon them all my debts to pay?

21 Your appeal is stayed: 'the charge has been withdrawn'  
(Sturgess)

32 applausive: agreeable

38 ruth: pity

40 mirrors: exemplars

42 humour: disposition

47 travail: exertion, trouble

SUSAN O brother, they are men all of flint,  
Pictures of marble, and as void of pity  
As chased bears. I begged, I sued, I kneeled,  
Laid open all your griefs and miseries,  
Which they derided. More than that, denied us  
A part in their alliance, but in pride,  
Said that our kindred with our plenty died. 70

SIR CHARLES Drudges too much! What, did they? O  
known evil:

Rich fly the poor, as good men shun the devil.  
Whence should my freedom come? Of whom alive,  
Saving of those, have I deserved so well?  
Guess, sister, call to mind, remember me.  
These I have raised, these follow the world's guise,  
Whom, rich in honour, they in woe despise.

SUSAN My wits have lost themselves. Let's ask the  
keeper.

SIR CHARLES Gaoler!

KEEPER At hand, sir. 80

SIR CHARLES Of courtesy resolve me one demand:

What was he took the burden of my debts  
From off my back, stayed my appeal to death,  
Discharged my fees, and brought me liberty?

KEEPER A courteous knight, one called Sir Francis  
Acton,

SUSAN Acton!

SIR CHARLES Ha! Acton! O me, more distressed in  
this

Than all my troubles. Hale me back,  
Double my irons, and my sparing meals  
Put into halves, and lodge me in a dungeon 90  
More deep, more dark, more cold, more comfortless.  
By Acton freed! Not all thy manacles  
Could fetter so my heels, as this one word  
Hath thrall'd my heart, and it must now lie bound  
In more strict prison than thy stony gaol.  
I am not free; I go but under bail.

KEEPER My charge is done, sir, now I have my fees.

As we get little, we will nothing leese. *Exit*

SIR CHARLES By Acton freed, my dangerous opposite.

Why? To what end? Or what occasion? Ha! 100

Let me forget the name of enemy,  
And with indifference balance this high favour. Ha!

SUSAN (*Aside*) His love to me, upon my soul 'tis so;

65 Pictures: statues

66 chased: tormented (as in bear-baiting)

69 alliance: kinship

71 Drudges too much: slaves too base

75 remember: remind

76 raised: mentioned, named

guise: fashion

98 leese: lose

99 opposite: adversary

102 indifference: impartiality

balance: weigh

That is the root from whence these strange things grow.  
 SIR CHARLES Had this proceeded from my father, he  
 That by the law of nature is most bound  
 In offices of love, it had deserved  
 My best employment to requite that grace.  
 Had it proceeded from my friends, or him,  
 From them this action had deserved my life;  
 And from a stranger more, because from such  
 There is less execution of good deeds.  
 But he, nor father, nor ally, nor friend,  
 More than a stranger, both remote in blood  
 And in his heart opposed my enemy,  
 That this high bounty should proceed from him!  
 O there I lose myself. What should I say?  
 What think, what do, his bounty to repay?  
 SUSAN You wonder, I am sure, whence this strange  
 kindness  
 Proceeds in Acton. I will tell you, brother. 120  
 He dotes on me, and oft hath sent me gifts,  
 Letters and tokens; I refused them all.  
 SIR CHARLES I have enough. Though poor, my heart is  
 set  
 In one rich gift to pay back all my debt.

*Exeunt*

## Scene xi

*Enter FRANKFORD and NICK, with keys, and a letter in his hand*

FRANKFORD This is the night, and I must play the  
 touch  
 To try two seeming angels. Where's my keys?  
 NICK They are made according to your mould in wax.  
 I bade the smith be secret, gave him money,  
 And there they are. The letter, sir.  
 FRANKFORD True, take it; there it is.  
 And when thou seest me in my pleasant'st vein  
 Ready to sit to supper, bring it me.  
 NICK I'll do't; make no more question but I'll do't. *Exit*

*Enter ANNE, CRANWELL, WENDOLL, and JENKIN*

ANNE Sirrah, 'tis six o'clock already struck. 10  
 Go bid them spread the cloth and serve in supper.  
 JENKIN It shall be done forsooth, mistress. Where is  
 Spiggot the butler, to give us out salt and trenchers?

WENDOLL We that have been a-hunting all the day  
 Come with prepared stomachs, Master Frankford.  
 We wished you at our sport.  
 FRANKFORD My heart was with you, and my mind was  
 on you.  
 Fie, Master Cranwell, you are still thus sad.  
 A stool, a stool! Where's Jenkin, and where's Nick?  
 'Tis supper time at least an hour ago. 20  
 What's the best news abroad?  
 WENDOLL I know none good.  
 FRANKFORD (*Aside*) But I know too much bad.  
*Enter SPIGGOT, the butler, and JENKIN with a tablecloth,  
 bread, trenchers, and salt, then exeunt*  
 CRANWELL Methinks, sir, you might have that interest  
 In your wife's brother to be more remiss  
 In this hard dealing against poor Sir Charles,  
 Who, as I hear, lies in York Castle, needy  
 And in great want.  
 FRANKFORD Did not more weighty business of my own  
 Hold me away, I would have laboured peace  
 Betwixt them with all care; indeed I would sir. 30  
 ANNE I'll write unto my brother earnestly  
 In that behalf.

WENDOLL A charitable deed,  
 And will beget the good opinion  
 Of all your friends that love you, Mistress Frankford.  
 FRANKFORD That's you for one; I know you love Sir  
 Charles  
 (*Aside*) And my wife too well.  
 WENDOLL He deserves the love  
 Of all true gentlemen. Be yourselves judge.  
 FRANKFORD But supper, ho! Now as thou lovest me,  
 Wendoll,  
 Which I am sure thou dost, be merry, pleasant,  
 And frolic it tonight. Sweet Master Cranwell, 40  
 Do you the like. Wife, I protest my heart  
 Was ne'er more bent on sweet alacrity.  
 Where be those lazy knaves to serve in supper?

*Enter NICK*

NICK Sir, here's a letter.  
 FRANKFORD Whence comes it? And who brought it?  
 NICK A stripling that below attends your answer,  
 And as he tells me it is sent from York.  
 FRANKFORD Have him into the cellar; let him taste a cup  
 Of our March beer. Go, make him drink. *Reads*

119–22 set as prose in Qs

SD *letter . . . hand*: it is not entirely clear, either in the SD or the text, who has the letter; it is probably, though not necessarily, Frankford (see ll. 5–6)

1 play the touch: make a test (from alchemy: use a touchstone to test gold)

2 angels: coins (with pun)

13 trenchers: plates

23–4 interest/In: influence with

24 remiss: lenient

SD *Aside*: we follow most recent eds in making this an aside. Sturgess, however, suggests that if 'too' is taken to mean 'very', this could be spoken directly to Wendoll as a veiled warning

42 alacrity: enjoyment

49 March beer: strong beer brewed in March

NICK I'll make him drunk, if he be a Trojan. *Exit*  
 FRANKFORD My boots and spurs! Where's Jenkin? God  
 forgive me, 51

How I neglect my business. Wife, look here,  
 I have a matter to be tried tomorrow  
 By eight o'clock, and my attorney writes me  
 I must be there betimes with evidence,  
 Or it will go against me. Where's my boots?

*Enter* JENKIN *with boots and spurs*

ANNE I hope your business craves no such dispatch  
 That you must ride tonight.

WENDOLL (*Aside*) I hope it doth.

FRANKFORD God's me! No such dispatch?  
 Jenkin, my boots. Where's Nick? Saddle my roan, 60  
 And the gray dapple for himself. *Exit* JENKIN

Content ye,

It much concerns me. Gentle Master Cranwell  
 And Master Wendoll, in my absence use  
 The very ripest pleasure of my house.

WENDOLL Lord, Master Frankford, will you ride  
 tonight?

The ways are dangerous.

FRANKFORD Therefore will I ride  
 Appointed well, and so shall Nick, my man.

ANNE I'll call you up by five o'clock tomorrow.

FRANKFORD No, by my faith, wife, I'll not trust to that.  
 'Tis not such easy rising in a morning 70  
 From one I love so dearly. No, by my faith,  
 I shall not leave so sweet a bedfellow,  
 But with much pain. You have made me a sluggard  
 Since I first knew you.

ANNE Then if you needs will go  
 This dangerous evening, Master Wendoll,  
 Let me entreat you bear him company.

WENDOLL With all my heart, sweet mistress. My boots  
 there!

FRANKFORD Fie, fie, that for my private business  
 I should disease my friend, and be a trouble

To the whole house. Nick! 80

NICK (*Off-stage*) Anon sir.

FRANKFORD Bring forth my gelding. As you love me, sir,  
 Use no more words. A hand, good Master Cranwell.

CRANWELL Sir, God be your good speed.

FRANKFORD Goodnight, sweet Nan. Nay, nay, a kiss  
 and part.

(*Aside*) Dissembling lips, you suit not with my heart.  
*Exit* FRANKFORD

50 Trojan: good fellow; drunkard

59 God's me: i.e. 'God save me'

61 Content ye: be assured

66 ways are dangerous: i.e. because of highwaymen

67 Appointed: equipped

79 disease: inconvenience

86 suit not: do not match

WENDOLL (*Aside*) How business, time and hours all  
 gracious proves

And are the furtherers to my newborn love.  
 I am husband now in Master Frankford's place,  
 And must command the house. (*To* ANNE) My  
 pleasure is 90

We will not sup abroad so publicly,  
 But in your private chamber, Mistress Frankford.

ANNE (*To* WENDOLL) O sir, you are too public in your  
 love,

And Master Frankford's wife—

CRANWELL Might I crave favour,  
 I would entreat you I might see my chamber.

I am on the sudden grown exceeding ill,  
 And would be spared from supper.

WENDOLL Light there, ho!  
 See you want nothing, sir, for if you do

You injury that good man, and wrong me too.

CRANWELL I will make bold. Goodnight. *Exit*

WENDOLL How all conspire  
 To make our bosom sweet and full entire. 101

Come, Nan, I prithee let us sup within.

ANNE O what a clog unto the soul is sin.

We pale offenders are still full of fear;  
 Every suspicious eye brings danger near,

When they whose clear heart from offence are free,

Despise report, base scandals to outface,

And stand at mere defiance with disgrace.

WENDOLL Fie, fie, you talk too like a Puritant.

ANNE You have tempted me to mischief, Master

Wendoll. 110

I have done I know not what. Well, you plead  
 custom;

That which for want of wit I granted erst

I now must yield through fear. Come, come, let's in.

Once o'er shoes, we are straight o'er head in sin.

WENDOLL My jocund soul is joyful above measure;

I'll be profuse in Frankford's richest treasure.

*Exeunt*

SD *Aside*: eds are divided as to whether Wendoll's first four  
 lines are an aside, and the final two and a half only  
 addressed to Anne. We follow Van Fossen and Scobie in  
 taking them to be so, particularly in the light of ll. 93-4  
 and Cranwell's continued presence

99 injury: synonymous with 'injure' at this date

101 bosom: desires

103 clog: impediment

104 pale: i.e. fearful

106 When: whereas

107 report: rumour

108 mere: complete

109 Puritant: Puritan, i.e. prude

110 mischief: wickedness

111 plead custom: 'i.e. that sin has acquired the force of right  
 by habitual practice' (Scobie)

112 erst: first

## Scene xii

Enter SISLY, JENKIN, SPIGGOT *the butler, and other*  
SERVINGMEN

JENKIN My mistress and Master Wendoll, my master, sup  
in her chamber tonight. Sisly, you are preferred from  
being the cook to be chambermaid. Of all the loves  
betwixt thee and me, tell me what thou thinkest of this.

SISLY Mum; there's an old proverb, 'When the cat's  
away, the mouse may play.'

JENKIN Now you talk of a cat, Sisly, I smell a rat.

SISLY Good words, Jenkin, lest you be called to answer  
them. 9

JENKIN Why, God make my mistress an honest  
woman—are not these good words? Pray God my  
new master play not the knave with my old master—  
is there any hurt in this? God send no villainy  
intended, and if they do sup together, pray God they  
do not lie together. God keep my mistress chaste,  
and make us all His servants—what harm is there in  
all this? Nay, more: here is my hand; thou shalt never  
have my heart unless thou say 'Amen'.

SISLY Amen, I pray God, I say. 19

Enter SERVINGMEN

SERVINGMAN My mistress sends that you should make  
less noise, to lock up the doors, and see the household  
all got to bed. You, Jenkin, for this night are made  
the porter, to see the gates shut in.

JENKIN Thus by little and little I creep into office.  
Come to kennel, my masters, to kennel; 'tis eleven  
o'clock already.

SERVINGMAN When you have locked the gates in, you  
must send up the keys to my mistress.

SISLY Quickly, for God's sake, Jenkin, for I must carry  
them. I am neither pillow nor bolster, but I know  
more than both. 31

JENKIN To bed, good Spiggot; to bed, good honest  
serving creatures, and let us sleep as snug as pigs in  
pease-straw.

*Exeunt*

## Scene xiii

Enter FRANKFORD and NICK

FRANKFORD Soft, soft. We have tied our geldings to a tree

2 preferred: promoted

5 Mum: be silent

8 answer: answer for

24 creep into office: slyly get promotion (Sturgess). Van  
Fossen glosses 'office' as 'office of a bawd or pander'

33-4 snug . . . pease-straw: proverbial. Pease-straw was straw  
from the pea plant

1-3 set as prose in Qs

Two flight-shoot off, lest by their thundering hooves  
They blab our coming back. Hearest thou no noise?

NICK Hear? I hear nothing but the owl and you.

FRANKFORD So; now my watch's hand points upon  
twelve,

And it is dead midnight. Where are my keys?

NICK Here, sir.

FRANKFORD This is the key that opes my outward gate,  
This is the hall door, this my withdrawing chamber.

But this, that door that's bawd unto my shame, 10

Fountain and spring of all my bleeding thoughts,

Where the most hallowed order and true knot

Of nuptial sanctity hath been profaned.

It leads to my polluted bedchamber,

Once my terrestrial heaven, now my earth's hell,

The place where sins in all their ripeness dwell.

But I forget myself; now to my gate.

NICK It must ope with far less noise than Cripplegate,  
or your plot's dashed. 19

FRANKFORD So, reach me my dark-lantern to the rest.

Tread softly, softly.

NICK I will walk on eggs this pace.

FRANKFORD A general silence hath surprised the house,

And this is the last door. Astonishment,

Fear and amazement play against my heart,  
Even as a madman beats upon a drum.

O keep my eyes, you heavens, before I enter,

From any sight that may transfix my soul;

Or if there be so black a spectacle,

O strike mine eyes stark blind; or if not so,

Lend me such patience to digest my grief 30

That I may keep this white and virgin hand

From any violent outrage or red murder.

And with that prayer I enter. *Exit*

NICK Here's a circumstance!

A man may be made cuckold in the time

That he's about it. And the case were mine,

As 'tis my master's,—'sblood, that he makes me  
swear—

2 Two flight-shoot: two bow-shots. 'Flight-shoot': arrows  
feathered for long range

3 blab: betray

9 withdrawing chamber: private room

18 Cripplegate: one of the gates to the city of London,  
situated near the Red Bull theatre, where this play is  
likely to have been staged

20 dark-lantern: a lantern with a shutter for concealing the  
light

to the rest: i.e. of the gates (eds)

21 walk . . . pace: i.e. I could walk on eggs at this pace  
(proverbial)

22 surprised: overtaken

34 circumstance: roundabout behaviour (eds)

36 And: if



I would have placed his action, entered there.  
I would, I would.

*Enter FRANKFORD*

FRANKFORD O, O!

NICK Master, 'sblood, master, master!

FRANKFORD O me unhappy, I have found them lying  
Close in each other's arms, and fast asleep.

But that I would not damn two precious souls  
Bought with my Saviour's blood, and send them  
laden

With all their scarlet sins upon their backs  
Unto a fearful judgement, their two lives  
Had met upon my rapier.

NICK 'Sblood, master, have you left them sleeping still?  
Let me go wake them.

FRANKFORD Stay; let me pause a while. 50

O God, O God, that it were possible  
To undo things done, to call back yesterday;  
That Time could turn up his swift sandy glass,  
To untell the days, and to redeem these hours.  
Or that the sun

Could, rising from the west, draw his coach  
backward,

Take from the account of time so many minutes,  
Till he had all these seasons called again,

Those minutes and those actions done in them,  
Even from her first offence, that I might take her 60  
As spotless as an angel in my arms.

But O! I talk of things impossible,  
And cast beyond the moon. God give me patience,  
For I will in to wake them. *Exit*

NICK Here's patience perforce!  
He needs must trot afoot that tires his horse.

*Enter WENDOLL running over the stage in a nightgown,  
FRANKFORD after him with his sword drawn; the maid in  
her smock stays his hand and clasps hold on him. He pauses  
a while*

FRANKFORD I thank thee, maid; thou like the angel's  
hand

Hast stayed me from a bloody sacrifice.  
Go, villain, and my wrongs sit on thy soul  
As heavy as this grief doth upon mine.

When thou recordest my many courtesies 70  
And shalt compare them with thy treacherous heart,

Lay them together, weigh them equally,  
'Twill be revenge enough. Go, to thy friend  
A Judas; pray, pray, lest I live to see  
Thee Judas-like hanged on an elder tree.

40 *Enter ANNE in her smock, nightgown and night attire*

ANNE O by what word, what title, or what name

Shall I entreat your pardon? Pardon! O  
I am as far from hoping such sweet grace  
As Lucifer from heaven. To call you husband!  
O me most wretched, I have lost that name; 80  
I am no more your wife.

NICK 'Sblood, sir, she sounds.

FRANKFORD Spare thou thy tears, for I will weep for  
thee;

And keep thy countenance, for I'll blush for thee.

Now I protest, I think 'tis I am tainted,

For I am most ashamed, and 'tis more hard

For me to look upon thy guilty face

Then on the sun's clear brow. What wouldst thou  
speak?

ANNE I would I had no tongue, no ears, no eyes,  
No apprehension, no capacity.

When do you spurn me like a dog? When tread me  
Under your feet? When drag me by the hair? 91

Though I deserve a thousand thousandfold

More than you can inflict, yet, once my husband,

For womanhood—to which I am a shame

Though once an ornament—even for His sake

That hath redeemed our souls, mark not my face

Nor hack me with your sword, but let me go

Perfect and undeformed to my tomb.

I am not worthy that I should prevail

In the least suit, no, not to speak to you, 100

Nor look on you, nor to be in your presence.

Yet, as an abject, this one suit I crave;

This granted, I am ready for my grave.

FRANKFORD My God with patience arm me! Rise, nay,  
rise,

And I'll debate with thee. Was it for want

Thou playedst the strumpet? Wast thou not supplied

With every pleasure, fashion, and new toy,

Nay, even beyond my calling?

ANNE I was.

FRANKFORD Was it then disability in me,

Or in thine eye seemed he a properer man? 110

38 placed his action: established his case (eds)

47 fearful judgement: i.e. if they have no opportunity to  
repent (Sturgess)

49-50 lineation as in Q3; set as prose in Q1

53 sandy glass: i.e. hourglass filled with sand

54 untell: count backwards

63 cast . . . moon: conjecture wildly (Van Fossen)

66-7 angel's . . . sacrifice: allusion to Abraham's proposed  
sacrifice of Isaac; Genesis 22.11-12

75 elder tree: believed to be the tree on which Judas hanged  
himself

81 sounds: swoons

89 apprehension . . . capacity: i.e. the active and passive  
powers of the mind

102 abject: outcast

107 toy: trinket

108 calling: rank. Scobie also notes a variant meaning of 'duty'

110 properer: more attractive

ANNE Oh no.

FRANKFORD Did I not lodge thee in my bosom?

Wear thee here in my heart?

ANNE You did.

FRANKFORD I did indeed; witness my tears I did.  
Go bring my infants hither.

*Exit MAID and returns with TWO CHILDREN*

O Nan, O Nan,

If either fear of shame, regard of honour,  
The blemish of my house, nor my dear love,  
Could have withheld thee from so lewd a fact,  
Yet for these infants, these young harmless souls,  
On whose white brows thy shame is charactered,  
And grows in greatness as they wax in years— 120  
Look but on them, and melt away in tears.

Away with them, lest as her spotted body  
Hath stained their names with stripe of bastardy,  
So her adulterous breath may blast their spirits,  
With her infectious thoughts. Away with them!

ANNE In this one life I die ten thousand deaths.

FRANKFORD Stand up, stand up. I will do nothing  
rashly.

I will retire a while into my study,  
And thou shalt hear thy sentence presently. *Exit*

ANNE 'Tis welcome, be it death. O me, base strumpet,  
That having such a husband, such sweet children, 131  
Must enjoy neither. O to redeem my honour  
I would have this hand cut off, these my breasts  
seared,

Be racked, strappadoed, put to any torment;  
Nay, to whip but this scandal out, I would hazard  
The rich and dear redemption of my soul.  
He cannot be so base, as to forgive me,  
Nor I so shameless to accept his pardon.  
O women, women, you that have yet kept  
Your holy matrimonial vow unstained, 140  
Make me your instance: when you tread awry,  
Your sins like mine will on your conscience lie.

*Enter SISLY, SPIGGOT, all the SERVINGMEN, and JENKIN,  
as newly come out of bed*

ALL Oh mistress, mistress, what have you done,  
mistress?

NICK 'Sblood, what a caterwauling keep you here.

JENKIN O Lord, mistress, how comes this to pass? My

master is run away in his shirt, and never so much as  
called me to bring his clothes after him.

ANNE See what guilt is; here stand I in this place,  
Ashamed to look my servants in the face.

*Enter MASTER FRANKFORD and CRANWELL, whom seeing  
she falls on her knees*

FRANKFORD My words are registered in heaven already;  
With patience hear me. I'll not martyr thee, 151  
Nor mark thee for a strumpet, but with usage  
Of more humility torment thy soul,  
And kill thee, even with kindness.

CRANWELL Master Frankford—  
FRANKFORD Good Master Cranwell—woman, hear thy  
judgment:

Go make thee ready in thy best attire,  
Take with thee all thy gowns, all thy apparel;  
Leave nothing that did ever call thee mistress,  
Or by whose sight being left here in the house  
I may remember such a woman by. 160  
Choose thee a bed and hangings for a chamber,  
Take with thee everything that hath thy mark,  
And get thee to my manor seven mile off,  
Where live. 'Tis thine; I freely give it thee.  
My tenants by shall furnish thee with wains  
To carry all thy stuff within two hours;  
No longer will I limit thee my sight.  
Choose which of all my servants thou likest best,  
And they are thine to attend thee.

ANNE A mild sentence.

FRANKFORD But as thou hopest for heaven, as thou  
believest 170

Thy name's recorded in the book of life,  
I charge thee never after this sad day  
To see me, or to meet me, or to send  
By word, or writing, gift, or otherwise  
To move me, by thyself, or by thy friends,  
Nor challenge any part in my two children.  
So farewell, Nan, for we will henceforth be  
As we had never seen, ne'er more shall see.

ANNE How full my heart is in my eyes appears.  
What wants in words, I will supply in tears. 180

FRANKFORD Come, take your coach, your stuff; all  
must along.  
Servants and all make ready, all be gone.  
It was thy hand cut two hearts out of one.

*Exeunt*

117 fact: action

119 charactered: written

122 spotted: morally stained

123 stripe of bastardy: i.e. badge of shame

124 blast: blight

134 strappadoed: the strappado was a torture in which the  
arms were fastened behind the back and the prisoner  
hoisted by them into the air and then allowed to fall part  
way back

146 shirt: nightshirt

165 by: nearby  
wains: carts

167 limit: allow

171 book of life: the Bible, the book in which are written the  
names of those who will inherit eternal life

176 challenge: claim

Scene xiv

*Enter SIR CHARLES, gentlemanlike, and SUSAN his sister, gentlewomanlike*

SUSAN Brother, why have you tricked me like a bride?  
Bought me this gay attire, these ornaments?  
Forget you our estate, our poverty?

SIR CHARLES Call me not brother, but imagine me  
Some barbarous outlaw, or uncivil kerne,  
For if thou shutt'st thy eye, and only hearest  
The words that I shall utter, thou shalt judge me  
Some staring ruffian, not thy brother Charles.  
O Susan!

SUSAN O brother, what doth this strange language  
mean? 10

SIR CHARLES Dost love me, sister? Wouldst thou see  
me live

A bankrupt beggar in the world's disgrace  
And die indebted to my enemies?  
Wouldst thou behold me stand like a huge beam  
In the world's eye, a byword and a scorn?  
It lies in thee of these to acquit me free,  
And all my debt I may outstrip by thee.

SUSAN By me? Why I have nothing, nothing, left;  
I owe even for the clothes upon my back.  
I am not worth—

SIR CHARLES O sister, say not so. 20  
It lies in you my downcast state to raise,  
To make me stand on even points with the world.  
Come, sister, you are rich! Indeed you are.  
And in your power you have, without delay,  
Acton's five hundred pound back to repay.

SUSAN Till now I had thought you loved me. By mine  
honour,

Which I had kept as spotless as the moon,  
I ne'er was mistress of that single doit  
Which I reserved not to supply your wants.  
And do you think that I would hoard from you? 30  
Now, by my hopes in heaven, knew I the means  
To buy you from the slavery of your debts,  
Especially from Acton, whom I hate,  
I would redeem it with my life or blood.

SIR CHARLES I challenge it, and, kindred set apart,

Thus ruffianlike I lay siege to your heart.  
What do I owe to Acton?

SUSAN Why, some five hundred pounds, toward which  
I swear

In all the world I have not one denier.

SIR CHARLES It will not prove so. Sister, now resolve  
me: 40

What do you think—and speak your conscience—  
Would Acton give might he enjoy your bed?

SUSAN He would not shrink to spend a thousand  
pound

To give the Mountfords' name so deep a wound.

SIR CHARLES A thousand pound! I but five hundred  
owe;

Grant him your bed, he's paid with interest so.

SUSAN Oh brother!

SIR CHARLES O sister! Only this one way,  
With that rich jewel you my debts may pay.  
In speaking this my cold heart shakes with shame,  
Nor do I woo you in a brother's name, 50  
But in a stranger's. Shall I die in debt  
To Acton, my grand foe, and you still wear  
The precious jewel that he holds so dear?

SUSAN My honour I esteem as dear and precious  
As my redemption.

SIR CHARLES I esteem you, sister,  
As dear for so dear prizing it.

SUSAN Will Charles  
Have me cut off my hands, and send them Acton?  
Rip up my breast, and with my bleeding heart  
Present him as a token?

SIR CHARLES Neither, sister, 60  
But hear me in my strange assertion:  
Thy honour and my soul are equal in my regard,  
Nor will thy brother Charles survive thy shame.  
His kindness like a burden hath surcharged me,  
And under his good deeds I stooping go,  
Not with an upright soul. Had I remained  
In prison still, there doubtless I had died.

Then unto him that freed me from that prison  
Still do I owe that life. What moved my foe  
To enfranchise me? 'Twas, sister, for your love.  
With full five hundred pounds he bought your love,  
And shall he not enjoy it? Shall the weight 71  
Of all this heavy burden lean on me,  
And will not you bear part? You did partake  
The joy of my release; will you not stand  
In joint bond bound to satisfy the debt?

1 tricked: decked

5 uncivil kerne: uncivilised peasant

8 staring: wild

14–15 a huge beam . . . eye: allusion to the passage in Christ's  
Sermon on the Mount concerning the mote and the  
beam (Matthew 7.3)

15 byword: an object of scorn or contempt

22 points: terms

28 doit: a Dutch coin worth half a farthing, used to signify a  
trifling sum. A denier (l. 39) was the name of another  
coin used in this way

36 ruffianlike: Q3 and all subsequent eds except Sturgess.  
Q1's 'Russian-like', Sturgess suggests, may be correct, as  
Russians were synonymous with uncivil roughness

40 resolve: tell, inform

63 His: i.e. Acton's

69 enfranchise: free

75 joint bond bound: bound with me jointly

Shall I be only charged?  
 SUSAN But that I know  
 These arguments come from an honoured mind,  
 As in your most extremity of need,  
 Scorning to stand in debt to one you hate,  
 Nay, rather would engage your unstained honour 80  
 Then to be held ingrate, I should condemn you.  
 I see your resolution, and assent;  
 So Charles will have me, and I am content.

SIR CHARLES For this I tricked you up.  
 SUSAN But here's a knife,  
 To save mine honour, shall slice out my life.

SIR CHARLES I know thou pleasest me a thousand times  
 More in that resolution than thy grant.  
 (*Aside*) Observe her love: to soothe them in my suit  
 Her honour she will hazard, though not lose.  
 To bring me out of debt, her rigorous hand 90  
 Will pierce her heart. O wonder, that will choose,  
 Rather than stain her blood, her life to lose.  
 (*To her*) Come, you sad sister to a woeful brother,  
 This is the gate. I'll bear him such a present,  
 Such an acquittance for the knight to seal,  
 As will amaze his senses, and surprise  
 With admiration all his fantasies.

*Enter ACTON and MALBY*

SUSAN Before his unchaste thoughts shall seize on me  
 'Tis here shall my imprisoned soul set free.

SIR FRANCIS How! Mountford with his sister hand in  
 hand! 100

What miracle's afoot?  
 MALBY It is a sight  
 Begets in me much admiration.

SIR CHARLES Stand not amazed to see me thus  
 attended.  
 Acton, I owe thee money, and being unable  
 To bring thee the full sum in ready coin,  
 Lo! For thy more assurance, here's a pawn,  
 My sister, my dear sister, whose chaste honour  
 I prize above a million. Here—nay, take her;  
 She's worth your money, man; do not forsake her.

SIR FRANCIS (*Aside*) I would he were in earnest. 110

SUSAN Impute it not to my immodesty.  
 My brother being rich in nothing else  
 But in his interest that he hath in me,  
 According to his poverty hath brought you

Me, all his store, whom howso'er you prize  
 As forfeit to your hand, he values highly,  
 And would not sell, but to acquit your debt  
 For any emperor's ransom.

SIR FRANCIS (*Aside*) Stern heart, relent;  
 Thy former cruelty at length repent.  
 Was ever known in any former age 120  
 Such honourable wrested courtesies?  
 Lands, honours, lives, and all the world forgo  
 Rather than stand engaged to such a foe.

SIR CHARLES Acton, she is too poor to be thy bride,  
 And I too much opposed to be thy brother.  
 There, take her to thee, if thou hast the heart  
 To seize her as a rape or lustful prey,  
 To blur our house that never yet was stained,  
 To murder her that never meant thee harm,  
 To kill me now whom once thou savedst from death,  
 Do them at once on her; all these rely 131  
 And perish with her spotted chastity.

SIR FRANCIS You overcome me in your love, Sir  
 Charles.

I cannot be so cruel to a lady  
 I love so dearly. Since you have not spared  
 To engage your reputation to the world,  
 Your sister's honour which you prize so dear,  
 Nay, all the comforts which you hold on earth,  
 To grow out of my debt, being your foe,  
 Your honoured thoughts, lo, thus I recompense: 140  
 Your metamorphised foe receives your gift  
 In satisfaction of all former wrongs.

This jewel I will wear here in my heart,  
 And where before I thought her for her wants  
 Too base to be my bride, to end all strife  
 I seal you my dear brother, her my wife.  
 SUSAN You still exceed us. I will yield to fate  
 And learn to love where I till now did hate.

SIR CHARLES With that enchantment you have  
 charmed my soul,  
 And made me rich even in those very words. 150  
 I pay no debt but am indebted more;  
 Rich in your love, I never can be poor.

SIR FRANCIS All's mine is yours; we are alike in state.  
 Let's knit in love what was opposed in hate:  
 Come, for our nuptials we will straight provide,  
 Blest only in our brother and fair bride.

*Exeunt*

80 engage: compromise

88 to soothe . . . suit: 'to appease those who are pursuing me'  
 (Scobie)

95 acquittance: document of release

97 admiration: wonder

99 'Tis here: i.e. the knife

106 pawn: pledge

SD *Aside*: eds; but Acton may instead be speaking to Malby

121 wrested: 'achieved by struggle' (Sturgess)

127 lustful prey: prey to your lust

131 rely: rely upon

139 To grow out of: 'i.e. in order to grow out of, to disburden  
 yourself' (Scobie)

144 wants: circumstances of want (eds)

155 straight: immediately

156 Blest only . . . bride: i.e. with no dowry

## Scene xv

*Enter* CRANWELL, FRANKFORD, *and* NICK

CRANWELL Why do you search each room about your house,

Now that you have dispatched your wife away?

FRANKFORD O sir, to see that nothing may be left  
That ever was my wife's. I loved her dearly,  
And when I do but think of her unkindness,  
My thoughts are all in hell, to avoid which torment  
I would not have a bodkin or a cuff,  
A bracelet, necklace, or rebato wire,  
Nor anything that ever was hers  
Left me, by which I might remember her. 10  
Seek round about.

NICK 'Sblood, master, here's her lute flung in a corner.

FRANKFORD Her lute! O God, upon this instrument  
Her fingers have run quick division,  
Sweeter than that which now divides our hearts.  
These frets have made me pleasant, that have now  
Frets of my heartstrings made. O Master Cranwell,  
Oft hath she made this melancholy wood,  
Now mute and dumb for her disastrous chance,  
Speak sweetly many a note, sound many a strain 20  
To her own ravishing voice, which being well strung,  
What pleasant strange airs have they jointly sung.  
Post with it after her. Now nothing's left;  
Of her and hers I am at once bereft.

NICK I'll ride and overtake her, do my message,  
And come back again. *Exit*

CRANWELL Meantime, sir, if you please,  
I'll to Sir Francis Acton and inform him  
Of what hath past betwixt you and his sister.

FRANKFORD Do as you please. How ill am I bestead  
To be a widower ere my wife be dead. 30  
*Exeunt*

## Scene xvi

*Enter* ANNE, *with* JENKIN, *her maid* SISLY, *her coachman,* *and* THREE CARTERS.

ANNE Bid my coach stay. Why should I ride in state,  
Being hurled so low down by the hand of fate?  
A seat like to my fortunes let me have,  
Earth for my chair, and for my bed a grave.

7 bodkin: pin for fastening hair

8 rebato wire: wire used to support ruff or collar

14 run quick division: executed a rapid melodic passage (eds)

16 frets: divisions on fingerboard (with pun in l. 17)  
pleasant: merry

19 for her disastrous chance: because of her misfortune

22 strange: exceptional

23 Post: hurry

29 bestead: situated

JENKIN Comfort good mistress; you have watered your  
coach with tears already. You have but two mile now  
to go to your manor. A man cannot say by my old  
Master Frankford as he may say by me, that he wants  
manors, for he hath three or four, of which this is one  
that we are going to. 10

SISLY Good mistress, be of good cheer. Sorrow you see  
hurts you, but helps you not. We all mourn to see  
you so sad.

CARTER Mistress, I spy one of my landlord's men  
Come riding post. 'Tis like he brings some news.

ANNE Comes he from Master Frankford, he is welcome;  
So are his news, because they come from him.

*Enter* NICK

NICK There. *Gives her the lute*

ANNE I know the lute. Oft have I sung to thee;  
We both are out of tune, both out of time. 20

NICK Would that had been the worst instrument that  
e'er you played on. My master commends him to ye;  
there's all he can find that was ever yours. He hath  
nothing left that ever you could lay claim to but his  
own heart, and he could afford you that. All that I  
have to deliver you is this. He prays you to forget  
him, and so he bids you farewell.

ANNE I thank him. He is kind and ever was.  
All you that have true feeling of my grief,  
That know my loss, and have relenting hearts, 30  
Gird me about, and help me with your tears  
To wash my spotted sins. My lute shall groan;  
It cannot weep, but shall lament my moan. *She plays*

*Enter* WENDOLL *unobserved*

WENDOLL Pursued with horror of a guilty soul,  
And with the sharp scourge of repentance lashed,  
I fly from my own shadow. O my stars!  
What have my parents in their lives deserved  
That you should lay this penance on their son?  
When I but think of Master Frankford's love,  
And lay it to my treason, or compare 40  
My murdering him for his relieving me,  
It strikes a terror like a lightning's flash  
To scorch my blood up. Thus I, like the owl  
Ashamed of day, live in these shadowy woods  
Afraid of every leaf or murmuring blast,  
Yet longing to receive some perfect knowledge  
How he hath dealt with her. (*Sees* ANNE) O my sad  
fate!

9 manors: an obvious pun on 'manners'

15 post: with speed

21 instrument: sexual pun

31 Gird me about: gather round me

40 lay: compare

46 perfect: correct

- Here, and so far from home, and thus attended.  
 O God, I have divorced the truest turtles  
 That ever lived together, and being divided  
 In several places, make their several moan;  
 She in the fields laments, and he at home.  
 So poets write that Orpheus made the trees  
 And stones to dance to his melodious harp,  
 Meaning the rustic and the barbarous hinds,  
 That had no understanding part in them;  
 So she from these rude carters tears extracts,  
 Making their flinty hearts with grief to rise  
 And draw down rivers from their rocky eyes.
- ANNE (*To* NICK) If you return unto your master say—  
 Though not from me, for I am all unworthy  
 To blast his name so with a strumpet's tongue—  
 That you have seen me weep, wish myself dead.  
 Nay, you may say too, for my vow is passed,  
 Last night you saw me eat and drink my last.  
 This to your master you may say and swear,  
 For it is writ in heaven and decreed here.
- NICK I'll say you wept; I'll swear you made me sad.  
 Why, how now, eyes? What now? What's here to do?  
 I am gone, or I shall straight turn baby too.
- WENDOLL (*Aside*) I cannot weep; my heart is all on fire.  
 Cursed be the fruits of my unchaste desire.
- ANNE Go break this lute upon my coach's wheel,  
 As the last music that I e'er shall make—  
 Not as my husband's gift, but my farewell  
 To all earth's joy; and so your master tell.
- NICK If I can for crying.
- WENDOLL (*Aside*) Grief, have done,  
 Or like a madman I shall frantic run.
- ANNE You have beheld the woofullest wretch on earth,  
 A woman made of tears. Would you had words  
 To express but what you see; my inward grief  
 No tongue can utter, yet unto your power  
 You may describe my sorrow, and disclose  
 To thy sad master my abundant woes.
- NICK I'll do your commendations.
- ANNE O no,  
 I dare not so presume, nor to my children.  
 I am disclaimed in both; alas, I am.  
 O never teach them when they come to speak  
 To name the name of mother. Chide their tongue  
 If they by chance light on that hated word;
- Tell them 'tis naught, for when that word they name,  
 Poor pretty souls, they harp on their own shame.
- WENDOLL (*Aside*) To recompense her wrongs, what  
 canst thou do?  
 Thou hast made her husbandless and childless too.
- ANNE I have no more to say. Speak not for me,  
 Yet you may tell your master what you see.
- NICK I'll do it. *Exit*
- WENDOLL (*Aside*) I'll speak to her, and comfort her in  
 grief.  
 O, but her wound cannot be cur'd with words.  
 No matter though, I'll do my best good will,  
 To work a cure on her whom I did kill.
- ANNE So, now unto my coach, then to my home,  
 So to my deathbed, for from this sad hour,  
 I never will nor eat, nor drink, nor taste  
 Of any cates that may preserve my life.  
 I never will nor smile, nor sleep, nor rest,  
 But when my tears have washed my black soul white,  
 Sweet Saviour, to thy hands I yield my sprite.
- WENDOLL (*To her*) O Mistress Frankford!  
 O for God's sake fly!  
 The devil doth come to tempt me ere I die.  
 My coach! This sin that with an angel's face  
 Courted mine honour till he sought my wrack,  
 In my repentant eyes seems ugly black.
- Exeunt all except WENDOLL and JENKIN, the  
 CARTERS whistling*
- JENKIN What, my young master that fled in his shirt?  
 How come you by your clothes again? You have  
 made our house in a sweet pickle, have you not, think  
 you? What, shall I serve you still, or cleave to the old  
 house?
- WENDOLL Hence, slave! Away with thy unseasoned  
 mirth.  
 Unless thou canst shed tears, and sigh, and howl,  
 Curse thy sad fortunes, and exclaim on fate,  
 Thou art not for my turn.
- JENKIN Marry, and you will not, another will. Farewell  
 and be hanged. Would you had never come to have  
 kept this coil within our doors. We shall ha' you run  
 away like a sprite again. *Exit*
- WENDOLL She's gone to death; I live to want and woe,  
 Her life, her sins, and all upon my head.

49 turtles: turtle doves, proverbially faithful

51 several: separate

53 Orpheus: legendary Greek poet so skilled that wild beasts were spellbound by his music. Wendoll's version of the tale was a common Renaissance one

55 hinds: rustics

64 passed: made

82 unto your power: as far as you are able

85 do your commendations: present your remembrances

91 naught: eds. Qs read 'nought'. Presumably a pun was intended on the two meanings ('wicked' and 'nothing')

105 cates: food

108 sprite: spirit

112 wrack: ruin

119 unseasoned: unseasonable

121 exclaim on: blame, rail at

122 for my turn: suitable for my purposes

123 and: if

125 kept this coil: made this trouble

And I must now go wander like a Cain  
 In foreign countries and remoted climes,  
 Where the report of my ingratitude  
 Cannot be heard. I'll over first to France,  
 And so to Germany, and Italy,  
 Where, when I have recovered, and by travel  
 Gotten those perfect tongues, and that these rumours  
 May in their height abate, I will return.  
 And I divine, however now dejected,  
 My worth and parts being by some great man  
 praised,  
 At my return I may in court be raised.

## Scene xvii

*Enter SIR FRANCIS, SIR CHARLES, CRANWELL, MALBY  
 and SUSAN*

SIR FRANCIS Brother, and now my wife, I think these  
 troubles  
 Fall on my head by justice of the heavens,  
 For being so strict to you in your extremities,  
 But we are now atoned. I would my sister  
 Could with like happiness o'ercome her griefs  
 As we have ours.  
 SUSAN You tell us, Master Cranwell, wondrous things  
 Touching the patience of that gentleman,  
 With what strange virtue he demeans his grief.  
 CRANWELL I told you what I was witness of. 10  
 It was my fortune to lodge there that night.  
 SIR FRANCIS O that same villain Wendoll! 'Twas his  
 tongue  
 That did corrupt her; she was of herself  
 Chaste and devoted well. Is this the house?  
 CRANWELL Yes, sir, I take it here your sister lies.  
 SIR FRANCIS My brother Frankford showed too mild a  
 spirit  
 In the revenge of such a loathed crime;  
 Less than he did, no man of spirit could do.  
 I am so far from blaming his revenge  
 That I commend it. Had it been my case 20  
 Their souls at once had from their breasts been freed;  
 Death to such deeds of shame is the due meed.

*Enter JENKIN and SISLY*

129 Cain: condemned by God to wander the earth as a  
 punishment for the murder of his brother Abel; see  
 Genesis 4.8-14  
 135 Gotten . . . tongues: learnt those languages perfectly  
 137 divine: predict  
 4 atoned: reconciled  
 9 demeans: expresses  
 14 devoted well: faithful  
 22 meed: recompense

JENKIN O my mistress, my mistress, my poor mistress!  
 SISLY Alas that ever I was born! What shall I do for my  
 poor mistress?  
 SIR CHARLES Why, what of her?  
 JENKIN O Lord, sir, she no sooner heard that her  
 brother and his friends were come to see how she did,  
 but she for very shame of her guilty conscience, fell  
 into a swoon, and we had much ado to get life into  
 her. 31  
 SUSAN Alas that she should bear so hard a fate;  
 Pity it is repentance comes too late.  
 SIR FRANCIS Is she so weak in body?  
 JENKIN O sir I can assure you there's no help of life in  
 her, for she will take no sustenance. She hath plainly  
 starved herself, that now she is as lean as a lath. She  
 ever looks for the good hour. Many gentlemen and  
 gentlewomen of the country are come to comfort her.

*Enter ANNE in her bed*

MALBY How fare you, Mistress Frankford? 40  
 ANNE Sick, sick, O sick! Give me some air, I pray you.  
 Tell me, O tell me, where's Master Frankford?  
 Will not he deign to see me ere I die?  
 MALBY Yes, Mistress Frankford; divers gentlemen,  
 Your loving neighbours, with that just request  
 Have moved and told him of your weak estate,  
 Who, though with much ado to get belief,  
 Examining of the general circumstance,  
 Seeing your sorrow and your penitence,  
 And hearing therewithal the great desire 50  
 You have to see him ere you left the world,  
 He gave to us his faith to follow us,  
 And sure he will be here immediately.  
 ANNE You half revived me with those pleasing news.  
 Raise me a little higher in my bed.  
 Blush I not, brother Acton? Blush I not, Sir Charles?  
 Can you not read my fault writ in my cheek?  
 Is not my crime there? Tell me, gentlemen.  
 SIR CHARLES Alas, good mistress, sickness hath not left  
 you  
 Blood in your face enough to make you blush. 60  
 ANNE Then sickness like a friend my fault would hide.  
 Is my husband come? My soul but tarries  
 His arrive and I am fit for heaven.  
 SIR FRANCIS I came to chide you, but my words of hate  
 Are turned to pity and compassionate grief.  
 I came to rate you, but my brawls, you see,  
 Melt into tears, and I must weep by thee.

27-31, 35-9 set as verse Q1, as prose Q3  
 38 the good hour: i.e. the hour of death  
 46 moved: taken action  
 52 faith: promise  
 66 rate: berate  
 brawls: reproaches

Enter FRANKFORD

Here's Master Frankford now.  
 FRANKFORD Good morrow, brother; good morrow gentlemen.  
 God, that hath laid this cross upon our heads, 70  
 Might, had He pleased, have made our cause of meeting  
 On a more fair and a more contented ground.  
 But he that made us, made us to this woe.  
 ANNE And is he come? Methinks that voice I know.  
 FRANKFORD How do you, woman?  
 ANNE Well, Master Frankford, well; but shall be better,  
 I hope, within this hour. Will you vouchsafe,  
 Out of your grace and your humanity,  
 To take a spotted strumpet by the hand?  
 FRANKFORD That hand once held my heart in faster 80  
 bonds  
 Than now 'tis gripped by me. God pardon them  
 That made us first break hold.  
 ANNE Amen, amen.  
 Out of my zeal to heaven, whither I am now bound,  
 I was so impudent to wish you here,  
 And once more beg your pardon. O good man,  
 And father to my children, pardon me.  
 Pardon, O pardon me! My fault so heinous is  
 That if you in this world forgive it not,  
 Heaven will not clear it in the world to come.  
 Faintness hath so usurped upon my knees 90  
 That kneel I cannot; but on my heart's knees  
 My prostrate soul lies thrown down at your feet  
 To beg your gracious pardon. Pardon, O pardon me!  
 FRANKFORD As freely from the low depth of my soul  
 As my Redeemer hath forgiven his death,  
 I pardon thee. I will shed tears for thee,  
 Pray with thee, and in mere pity  
 Of thy weak state, I'll wish to die with thee.  
 ALL So do we all.  
 NICK (*Aside*) So will not I! 100  
 I'll sigh and sob, but, by my faith, not die.  
 SIR FRANCIS O Master Frankford, all the near alliance  
 I lose by her shall be supplied in thee.  
 You are my brother by the nearest way;  
 Her kindred hath fallen off, but yours doth stay.  
 FRANKFORD Even as I hope for pardon at that day  
 When the great Judge of Heaven in scarlet sits,  
 So be thou pardoned. Though thy rash offence  
 Divorced our bodies, thy repentant tears  
 Unite our souls.

76 better: i.e. in heaven

90 usurped upon: taken possession of

97 mere: absolute

102 alliance: kinship

105 Her . . . stay: 'Although she, being about to die, will cease to be my sister, you are still of my kin' (Van Fossen)

SIR CHARLES Then comfort, Mistress Frankford;  
 You see your husband hath forgiven your fall; 111  
 Then rouse your spirits and cheer your fainting soul.  
 SUSAN How is it with you?  
 SIR FRANCIS How do you feel yourself?  
 ANNE Not of this world.  
 FRANKFORD I see you are not, and I weep to see it.  
 My wife, the mother to my pretty babes,  
 Both those lost names I do restore thee back.  
 And with this kiss I wed thee once again.  
 Though thou art wounded in thy honoured name,  
 And with that grief upon thy deathbed liest, 120  
 Honest in heart, upon my soul, thou diest.  
 ANNE Pardoned on earth, soul, thou in heaven art free.  
 Once more thy wife, dies thus embracing thee. *Dies*  
 FRANKFORD New married, and new widowed; O she's  
 dead,  
 And a cold grave must be our nuptial bed.  
 SIR CHARLES Sir, be of good comfort, and your heavy  
 sorrow  
 Part equally amongst us; storms divided  
 Abate their force, and with less rage are guided.  
 CRANWELL Do, Master Frankford; he that hath least part  
 Will find enough to drown one troubled heart. 130  
 SIR FRANCIS Peace with thee, Nan. Brothers and  
 gentlemen,  
 All we that can plead interest in her grief,  
 Bestow upon her body funeral tears.  
 Brother, had you with threats and usage bad  
 Punished her sin, the grief of her offence  
 Had not with such true sorrow touched her heart.  
 FRANKFORD I see it had not; therefore on her grave  
 I will bestow this funeral epitaph,  
 Which on her marble tomb shall be engraved.  
 In golden letters shall these words be filled: 140  
 Here lies she whom her husband's kindness killed.

## 100 The Epilogue

An honest crew, disposed to be merry,  
 Came to a tavern by and called for wine.  
 The drawer brought it, smiling like a cherry,  
 And told them it was pleasant, neat, and fine.  
 'Taste it,' quoth one. He did so. 'Fie!' quoth he,  
 'This wine was good; now't runs too near the lee.'

119 honoured name: reputation

121 Honest: chaste

123 Once more thy wife: 'i.e. having once more been restored to being your wife, (she dies)' (Scobie)

140 filled: most eds take this to mean that the letters would be filled in with gold. Sturgess, however, suggests that Qr's 'fil'd' might mean 'filed': 'arranged in order'

2 by: nearby

4 neat: pure

6 lee: lees, sediment



THOMAS HEYWOOD

Another sipped, to give the wine his due,  
And said unto the rest it drunk too flat.  
The third said it was old, the fourth too new.  
'Nay,' quoth the fifth, 'the sharpness likes me not.' 10  
Thus, gentlemen, you see how in one hour  
The wine was new, old, flat, sharp, sweet, and sour.

Unto this wine we do allude our play,  
Which some will judge too trivial, some too grave.  
You as our guests we entertain this day  
And bid you welcome to the best we have.  
Excuse us, then; good wine may be disgraced  
When every several mouth hath sundry taste.

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13 allude: compare

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## Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, *The Fair Queen of Jewry*

Written 1604–6  
First published 1613

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As with so many of the plays in this collection, the terms, meanings and limits of femininity can be seen to lie at the heart of *The Tragedy of Mariam*. Like *The Roaring Girl*, it examines the constituents of the often fragile balance of power between women and men within marriage; like *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, it investigates the terms of, pressures on, and limits to marital duty and loyalty; like *Epicoene*, the issue of women's speech versus women's silence is fundamental to the progression of the plot.

What is striking about *The Tragedy of Mariam*, however, is the complexity and the ambiguity of its representation of gendered power relations. For example, the apparently simple polar opposites, such as the good and the bad woman, around which the play is structured turn out to be rather more complicated than they at first seem. Of course, Mariam is clearly the heroine, her tragic death precipitated by her 'virtues' of honesty, conscience and integrity, and Salome is her evil foil, duplicitous, scheming and ruthless. Yet Salome has an energy and a wit, reminiscent of Edmund in *King Lear* or of Richard III, which are not unattractive, and her analysis of the injustice of women's unequal access to divorce, together with her rousing resolution to 'be the custom-breaker, and begin/To show my sex the way to freedom's door' (I.iv.309–10) have proved particularly compelling for modern readers. In the light of this, it is, moreover, striking that Salome's murderous duplicity remains unpunished at the end of the play. Even the figure of Mariam herself shares some of these ambiguities. Whilst her death (read by some critics, such as Beilin, as prefigurative of Christ's) is without doubt the tragic climax of the play, it is significant that the last we see of Mariam, in IV.viii, is with Doris (Herod's first wife, whom he divorced to marry Mariam) voicing her complaint against Mariam for having usurped her place and for ignoring the pain she caused. Her complaint is not wholly unjust, and this scene thereby constitutes an ambiguous and unsettling final glimpse of the tragic heroine, and one which serves only to highlight the idealising 'constructedness' of the retrospective reports of Mariam in Act V. Far from positioning the women characters on a linear axis somewhere between 'good' and 'bad', the play instead figures them within a network of

multiple and mutually informing, but ultimately indeterminate, relationships with each other.

Equally ambiguous are the representations of women's relationships to speech and silence. Reproducing conventional early modern ideological wisdom that women's honour depended in large part on their docility and obedience, characterised by a deferential silence, Sohemus suggests that Mariam's refusal to constrain her 'public voice' (I.i.1) will be her downfall (III.iii.183–4). This is a view with which the Chorus, albeit in an opaque and complicated way, concurs (see the third Chorus) and which Herod himself confirms, linking her speech with her supposed infidelity: 'She's unchaste;/Her mouth will ope to every stranger's ear' (IV.vii.432–3). Yet Pheroras reads the silence of Graphina, an idealised model of deferential femininity, as 'a sign of discontent', and urges her to 'move [her] tongue' (II.i.41). If the characters themselves cannot be consigned to polar positions, neither can the stance taken in the play on the meanings of women's speech, whether 'public' or 'private'.

*The Tragedy of Mariam* occupies an important position in the histories both of English women's writing and of Renaissance drama. It is the first original tragedy written by an Englishwoman (although women had published translations of classical and French plays before). It is also one of only a dozen extant English closet dramas: plays in the tradition of Senecan revenge tragedy, and taken by most critics to have been written not for performance on the public stage, but to be read, either privately or aloud in groups—though it is worth noting that, contrary to this assumption, Wright argues strongly for the dramatic, as well as rhetorical and intellectual, achievement of *Mariam* and, in demonstration of this, has directed a production of it (see Wright 1996: 20–3). These elements have contributed to its status as a key 'recovered' text—one that had been allowed to disappear from view for over three centuries but which, thanks to the work of (in this case) contemporary feminist scholarship, has been substantially re-evaluated.

Nor is the case closed regarding the significance of this text. Whilst its passage back into print was the outcome of feminist critical intervention, and a feminist

critical perspective has informed readings of the play in relation both to Cary's own biography and to the position of women writing for publication in Jacobean England more generally (see, for example, Ferguson 1991; Gutierrez 1991), this approach does not exhaust the possible readings of the play. Callaghan (1994), for example, has asked why a play that is set in Palestine among the Jews has been read as so 'obviously' about gender rather than 'race', and goes on to show how, throughout the text, the meanings of gender are persistently and variously inflected through ideas about 'race'. Fischer (1985), Lewalski (1993) and Shannon (1994) begin from the pre-existing generic association of the closet drama with issues of public morality and government, and read the play as an intervention into debates about tyranny, both domestic and state, and civil order and disorder. Findlay (1999), in turn, offers new perspectives on the play by reading it within the context of other generic affiliations: namely, the revenge play and the domestic tragedy. Having initially been reclaimed as an 'exceptional', even anomalous, text, *The Tragedy of Mariam* has now been shown to be central to the debates that characterise contemporary critical interest in Renaissance drama as a whole.

### Textual note

This edition is based on the first edition of 1613 printed in London by Thomas Creede. This quarto edition is referred to in the footnotes as Q. We number the lines of each act continuously rather than scene by scene, since scene breaks frequently denote the entry of a new character rather than a break in the action.

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Henry Chettle, Thomas Dekker and William Haughton,  
*Patient Grissel* (1600)  
Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603)  
Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Blackness* (1605)

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## *The Tragedy of Mariam, The Fair Queen of Jewry (1604)*

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### **To Diana's Earthly Deputess, and My Worthy Sister, Mistress Elizabeth Cary**

When cheerful Phoebus his full course hath run,  
His sister's fainter beams our hearts doth cheer:  
So your fair brother is to me the sun,  
And you his sister as my moon appear.

You are my next belov'd, my second friend,  
For when my Phoebus' absence makes it night,  
Whilst to th'Antipodes his beams do bend,  
From you my Phoebe, shines my second light.

He like to Sol, clear-sighted, constant, free,  
You Luna-like, unspotted, chaste, divine:  
He shone on Sicily, you destined be  
T'illumine the now obscured Palestine.  
My first was consecrated to Apollo,  
My second to Diana now shall follow.

E. C.

### **The names of the speakers**

HEROD, *King of Judea*

DORIS, *his first wife*

MARIAM, *his second wife*

SALOME, *Herod's sister*

ANTIPATER, *his son by Doris*

ALEXANDRA, *Mariam's mother*

SILLEUS, *Prince of Arabia*

CONSTABARUS, *husband to Salome*

PHERORAS, *Herod's brother*

IO GRAPHINA, *his love*

BABAS' FIRST SON

BABAS' SECOND SON

ANANELL, *the high priest*

SOHEMUS, *a counsellor to Herod*

NUNTIO *a messenger*

BUTLER, *another messenger*

SILLEUS'S MAN

SOLDIER

CHORUS, *a company of Jews*

### **The Argument**

Herod, the son of Antipater (an Idumean), having crept by the favour of the Romans into the Jewish monarchy, married Mariam, the granddaughter of Hircanus, the rightful king and priest, and for her (besides her high

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1 Idumean: another name for the Edomites, not considered true Jews, and therefore a pejorative term in this context

3 granddaughter: eds (daughter Q); see next paragraph, where the error is corrected with regard to Mariam's brother

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Dedication: probably to the playwright's sister-in-law, also called Elizabeth, who married Philip Cary, brother of Cary's husband Henry, in 1609. It has also been suggested that the dedication might be to Henry Cary's own sister Elizabeth. This sonnet is found in only two of the extant copies of *Mariam*

1 Phoebus: the Greek god of the sun

3 brother: i.e. Henry Cary

7 Antipodes: the other side of the earth

8 Phoebe: the moon; this and Luna (l. 10) are alternative names for Diana

9 Sol: the sun; this and Phoebus are alternative names for Apollo

11 Sicily: Cary seems to have written an earlier play, now lost, set in Sicily and dedicated to her husband (hence the reference to 'my first' in l. 13)

blood, being of singular beauty) he repudiated Doris, his former wife, by whom he had children. 6

This Mariam had a brother called Aristobolus, and next him and Hircanus his grandfather, Herod in his wife's right had the best title. Therefore to remove them, he charged the first with treason and put him to death, and drowned the second under colour of sport. Alexandra, daughter to the one, and mother to the other, accused him for their deaths before Antony. 13

So when he was forced to go answer this accusation at Rome, he left the custody of his wife to Josephus his uncle, that had married his sister Salome, and out of a violent affection (unwilling any should enjoy her after him) he gave strict and private commandment, that if he were slain, she should be put to death. But he returned with much honour, yet found his wife extremely discontented, to whom Josephus had (meaning it for the best, to prove Herod loved her) revealed his charge. 23

So by Salome's accusation he put Josephus to death, but was reconciled to Mariam, who still bore the death of her friends exceeding hardly.

In this meantime Herod was again necessarily to revisit Rome, for Caesar having overthrown Antony, his great friend, was likely to make an alteration of his fortune. 30

In his absence, news came to Jerusalem that Caesar had put him to death; their willingness it should be so, together with the likelihood, gave this rumour so good credit, as Sohemus that had succeeded Josephus' charge succeeded him likewise in revealing it. So at Herod's return, which was speedy and unexpected, he found Mariam so far from joy, that she showed apparant signs of sorrow. He still desiring to win her to a better humour, she being very unable to conceal her passion, fell to upbraiding him with her brother's death. As they were thus debating, came in a fellow with a cup of wine, who, hired by Salome, said first it was a love potion, which Mariam desired to deliver to the king; but afterwards he affirmed that it was a poison, and that Sohemus had told her somewhat which procured the vehement hate in her. 46

The king hearing this, more moved with jealousy of Sohemus than with this intent of poison, sent her away, and presently after by the instigation of Salome, she was beheaded. Which rashness was afterward punished in him, with an intolerable and almost frantic passion for her death.

10–11 first . . . second: in fact these should be reversed, as Herod arranged for Aristobolus to be drowned and had Hircanus accused of treason

13 Antony: Mark Antony (c. 83–30 BC)

28 Caesar: Octavius Caesar defeated Antony at the battle of Actium (31 BC)

45 somewhat: something

## Act I, scene i

MARIAM *sola*

MARIAM How oft have I with public voice run on  
To censure Rome's last hero for deceit,  
Because he wept when Pompey's life was gone,  
Yet when he lived, he thought his name too great.  
But now I do recant, and, Roman lord,  
Excuse too rash a judgement in a woman:  
My sex pleads pardon, pardon then afford,  
Mistaking is with us but too too common.  
Now do I find, by self-experience taught,  
One object yields both grief and joy: 10  
You wept indeed, when on his worth you thought,  
But joyed that slaughter did your foe destroy.  
So at his death your eyes true drops did rain,  
Whom dead, you did not wish alive again.  
When Herod lived, that now is done to death,  
Oft have I wished that I from him were free:  
Oft have I wished that he might lose his breath,  
Oft have I wished his carcass dead to see.  
Then rage and scorn had put my love to flight,  
That love which once on him was firmly set; 20  
Hate hid his true affection from my sight,  
And kept my heart from paying him his debt.  
And blame me not, for Herod's jealousy  
Had power even constancy itself to change:  
For he by barring me from liberty,  
To shun my ranging, taught me first to range.  
But yet too chaste a scholar was my heart,  
To learn to love another than my lord:  
To leave his love, my lesson's former part,  
I quickly learned, the other I abhorred. 30  
But now his death to memory doth call  
The tender love that he to Mariam bare:  
And mine to him; this makes those rivers fall,  
Which by another thought unmoistened are.  
For Aristobolus, the loveliest youth  
That ever did in angel's shape appear,  
The cruel Herod was not moved to ruth;  
Then why grieves Mariam Herod's death to hear?  
Why joy I not the tongue no more shall speak,

SD *sola*: alone

3 he: Weller and Ferguson suggest this refers to Julius Caesar's reaction to the severed head of his dead adversary, Pompey

4 Yet: although

10 the line is two syllables short

26 shun: prevent

29–30 To leave . . . abhorred: i.e. although I learned to reject Herod, I could not commit adultery

32 bare: bore

34 unmoistened: i.e. dried up

35 loveliest: eds (lowlyest Q)

That yielded forth my brother's latest doom? 40  
 Both youth and beauty might thy fury break,  
 And both in him did ill befit a tomb.  
 And worthy grandsire ill did he requite,  
 His high ascent alone by thee procured,  
 Except he murdered thee to free the sprite  
 Which still he thought on earth too long immured.  
 How happy was it that Sohemus' mind  
 Was moved to pity my distressed estate!  
 Might Herod's life a trusty servant find,  
 My death to his had been unseparate. 50  
 These thoughts have power his death to make me bear,  
 Nay more, to wish the news may firmly hold:  
 Yet cannot this repulse some falling tear,  
 That will against my will some grief unfold.  
 And more I owe him for his love to me,  
 The deepest love that ever yet was seen:  
 Yet had I rather much a milkmaid be,  
 Than be the monarch of Judea's queen.  
 It was for nought but love he wished his end  
 Might to my death but the vaunt-courier prove: 60  
 But I had rather still be foe than friend,  
 To him that saves for hate, and kills for love.  
 Hard-hearted Mariam, at thy discontent  
 What floods of tears have drenched his manly face?  
 How canst thou then so faintly now lament  
 Thy truest lover's death, a death's disgrace:  
 Ay, now mine eyes you do begin to right  
 The wrongs of your admirer and my lord;  
 Long since you should have put your smiles to flight,  
 Ill doth a widowed eye with joy accord. 70  
 Why now methinks the love I bore him then,  
 When virgin freedom left me unrestrained,  
 Doth to my heart begin to creep again,  
 My passion now is far from being feigned.  
 But tears fly back, and hide you in your banks,  
 You must not be to Alexandra seen:  
 For if my moan be spied, but little thanks  
 Shall Mariam have, from that incensed queen.

## Act I, scene ii

MARIAM, ALEXANDRA

ALEXANDRA What means these tears? My Mariam  
 doth mistake,  
 The news we heard did tell the tyrant's end: 80

40 latest: final  
 41 thy: i.e. Herod's  
 45 Except: unless  
 45 sprite: spirit  
 47 mind: eds (maide Q)  
 60 vaunt-courier: forerunner  
 66 death's disgrace: i.e. his death is disgraced by the faintness of her lamentation

What weepst thou for thy brother's murd'rer's sake,  
 Will ever wight a tear for Herod spend?  
 My curse pursue his breathless trunk and spirit,  
 Base Edomite, the damnèd Esau's heir:  
 Must he ere Jacob's child the crown inherit?  
 Must he, vile wretch, be set in David's chair?  
 No, David's soul, within the bosom placed  
 Of our forefather Abram, was ashamed:  
 To see his seat with such a toad disgraced,  
 That seat that hath by Judah's race been famed. 90  
 Thou fatal enemy to royal blood,  
 Did not the murder of my boy suffice  
 To stop thy cruel mouth that gaping stood?  
 But must thou dim the mild Hircanus' eyes,  
 My gracious father, whose too ready hand  
 Did lift this Idumean from the dust;  
 And he, ungrateful caitiff, did withstand  
 The man that did in him most friendly trust.  
 What kingdom's right could cruel Herod claim,  
 Was he not Esau's issue, heir of hell? 100  
 Then what succession can he have but shame?  
 Did not his ancestor his birthright sell?  
 O yes, he doth from Edom's name derive  
 His cruel nature which with blood is fed:  
 That made him me of sire and son deprive,  
 He ever thirsts for blood, and blood is red.  
 Weepst thou because his love to thee was bent?  
 And readst thou love in crimson characters?  
 Slew he thy friends to work thy heart's content?  
 No: hate may justly call that action hers. 110  
 He gave the sacred priesthood for thy sake  
 To Aristobolus; yet doomed him dead  
 Before his back the ephod warm could make,  
 And ere the mitre settled on his head.  
 Oh had he given my boy no less than right,  
 The double oil should to his forehead bring  
 A double honour, shining doubly bright:  
 His birth anointed him both priest and king.  
 And say my father and my son he slew,  
 To royalize by right your prince-born breath: 120  
 Was love the cause, can Mariam deem it true,  
 That Herod gave commandment for her death?

82 wight: person  
 84 Edomite: see note to l. 1 of 'The Argument'  
 85 Jacob's child: a descendant of Jacob (such as Hircanus or Aristobolus)  
 86 chair: throne (of Judea)  
 90 famed: eds (fain'd Q)  
 97 caitiff: wretch  
 102 ancestor . . . sell: Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob  
 103-6 Edom's name . . . blood is red: Edom, meaning 'the red', was an alternative name given to Esau; see Genesis 25.29-34  
 113 ephod: garment worn by Jewish priests  
 122 Herod: eds (Mariam Q)

I know by fits he showed some signs of love,  
 And yet not love, but raging lunacy:  
 And this his hate to thee may justly prove,  
 That sure he hates Hircanus' family.  
 Who knows if he, unconstant wavering lord,  
 His love to Doris had renewed again?  
 And that he might his bed to her afford,  
 Perchance he wished that Mariam might be slain. 130

MARIAM

Doris? Alas, her time of love was past,  
 Those coals were raked in embers long ago,  
 If Mariam's love, and she, was now disgraced,  
 Nor did I glory in her overthrow.  
 He not a whit his first-born son esteemed,  
 Because as well as his he was not mine:  
 My children only for his own he deemed,  
 These boys that did descend from royal line.  
 These did he style his heirs to David's throne;  
 My Alexander, if he live, shall sit 140  
 In the majestic seat of Solomon;  
 To will it so, did Herod think it fit.

ALEXANDRA Why? Who can claim from Alexander's brood

That gold-adornèd lion-guarded chair?  
 Was Alexander not of David's blood?  
 And was not Mariam Alexander's heir?  
 What more than right could Herod then bestow,  
 And who will think except for more than right  
 He did not raise them, for they were not low,  
 But born to wear the crown in his despite. 150  
 Then send those tears away that are not sent  
 To thee by reason, but by passion's power:  
 Thine eyes to cheer, thy cheeks to smiles be bent,  
 And entertain with joy this happy hour.  
 Felicity, if when she comes, she finds  
 A mourning habit, and a cheerless look,  
 Will think she is not welcome to thy mind,  
 And so perchance her lodging will not brook.  
 Oh, keep her whilst thou hast her; if she go  
 She will not easily return again: 160  
 Full many a year have I endured in woe,  
 Yet still have sued her presence to obtain;

SP MARIAM: eds (NUN: Q)

133 If: some eds suggest emending to 'of', running this line on from the one before, and removing the comma after 'she'

141 Solomon: king of Israel, renowned for his wisdom

146 Alexander's heir: although Mariam has been talking of her son Alexander, Alexandra is here referring to her husband, Mariam's father, also called Alexander

146-50 What more . . . his despite: meaning obscure; Wright suggests 'everyone will be of the opinion that Mariam's son is the rightful heir (Mariam being a direct descendant of David) rather than the fact that he was named as heir by Herod'

155 Felicity: the personification of good fortune

And did not I to her as presents send  
 A table, that best art did beautify,  
 Of two, to whom heaven did best feature lend,  
 To woo her love by winning Antony?  
 For when a prince's favour we do crave,  
 We first their minions' loves do seek to win:  
 So I, that sought felicity to have,  
 Did with her minion Antony begin. 170  
 With double sleight I sought to captivate  
 The warlike lover, but I did not right:  
 For if my gift had borne but half the rate,  
 The Roman had been overtaken quite.  
 But now he farèd like a hungry guest,  
 That to some plenteous festival is gone;  
 Now this, now that, he deems to eat were best,  
 Such choice doth make him let them all alone.  
 The boy's large forehead first did fairest seem,  
 Then glanced his eye upon my Mariam's cheek: 180  
 And that without comparison did deem,  
 What was in either but he most did seek.  
 And thus distracted, either's beauties' might  
 Within the other's excellence was drowned:  
 Too much delight did bear him from delight,  
 For either's love, the other's did confound.  
 Where if thy portraiture had only gone,  
 His life from Herod, Antony had taken:  
 He would have loved thee, and thee alone,  
 And left the brown Egyptian clean forsaken. 190  
 And Cleopatra then to seek had been  
 So firm a lover of her wanèd face;  
 Then great Antonius' fall we had not seen,  
 By her that fled to have him hold the chase.  
 Then Mariam in a Roman's chariot set,  
 In place of Cleopatra might have shown:  
 A mart of beauties in her visage met,  
 And part in this, that they were all her own.  
 MARIAM Not to be empress of aspiring Rome  
 Would Mariam like to Cleopatra live: 200  
 With purest body will I press my tomb,  
 And wish no favours Antony could give.

164 table: portrait. Alexandra sent a picture of her two children, Aristobolus and Mariam, to Antony, to try to win his favour. According to Cary's source, Josephus, Antony sent only for Aristobolus (a request that Herod denied); here, however, Cary suggests that he was equally attracted to the two

173 rate: value

185 bear: eds (bare Q). Some eds emend to 'bar'; Weller and Ferguson retain 'bare' to condense these two meanings as well as a third ('bare' meaning 'strip')

191 to seek had been: i.e. would have had to seek

194 her . . . chase: in the Battle of Actium (31 BC), Antony followed Cleopatra's fleeing ship, thereby losing the battle and the war to Octavius

197 mart: market



ALEXANDRA Let us retire us, that we may resolve  
How now to deal in this reversèd state:  
Great are th'affairs that we must now revolve,  
And great affairs must not be taken late.

### Act I, scene iii

MARIAM, ALEXANDRA, SALOME

SALOME More plotting yet? Why, now you have the  
thing  
For which so oft you spent your suppliant breath,  
And Mariam hopes to have another king,  
Her eyes do sparkle joy for Herod's death. 210  
ALEXANDRA If she desired another king to have,  
She might before she came in Herod's bed  
Have had her wish. More kings than one did crave  
For leave to set a crown upon her head.  
I think with more than reason she laments,  
That she is freed from such a sad annoy:  
Who is't will weep to part from discontent,  
And if she joy, she did not causeless joy.

SALOME You durst not thus have given your tongue the  
rein

If noble Herod still remained in life: 220  
Your daughter's betters far, I dare maintain,  
Might have rejoiced to be my brother's wife.

MARIAM My betters far! Base woman, 'tis untrue:  
You scarce have ever my superiors seen,  
For Mariam's servants were as good as you,  
Before she came to be Judea's queen.

SALOME Now stirs the tongue that is so quickly moved,  
But more than once your choler have I borne:  
Your fumish words are sooner said than proved,  
And Salome's reply is only scorn. 230

MARIAM Scorn those that are for thy companions held.  
Though I thy brother's face had never seen,  
My birth thy baser birth so far excelled,  
I had to both of you the princess been.  
Thou parti-Jew, and parti-Edomite,  
Thou mongrel, issued from rejected race,  
Thy ancestors against the heavens did fight,  
And thou like them wilt heavenly birth disgrace.

SALOME Still twit you me with nothing but my birth,  
What odds betwixt your ancestors and mine? 240  
Both born of Adam, both were made of earth,  
And both did come from holy Abraham's line.

205 revolve: consider

228 choler: anger

229 fumish: irascible

237 ancestors . . . fight: the Old Testament prophets  
considered Edom's conflict with Israel to be in defiance  
of divine will; see Ezekiel 25.13; Jeremiah 49.7-22; Amos  
1.11-12; Obadiah 1.18

239 twit: taunt

MARIAM I favour thee when nothing else I say;  
With thy black acts I'll not pollute my breath,  
Else to thy charge I might full justly lay  
A shameful life, besides a husband's death.

SALOME 'Tis true indeed, I did the plots reveal,  
That passed betwixt your favourites and you:  
I meant not, I, a traitor to conceal.  
Thus Salome your minion Joseph slew. 250

MARIAM Heaven, dost thou mean this infamy to  
smother?

Let slandered Mariam ope thy closèd ear:  
Self-guilt hath ever been suspicion's mother,  
And therefore I this speech with patience bear.  
No, had not Salome's unsteadfast heart  
In Josephus' stead her Constabarus placed,  
To free herself she had not used the art  
To slander hapless Mariam for unchaste.

ALEXANDRA Come Mariam, let us go: it is no boot  
To let the head contend against the foot. 260  
*Exeunt MARIAM and ALEXANDRA*

### Act I, scene iv

SALOME, *sola*

SALOME Lives Salome to get so base a style  
As foot to the proud Mariam? Herod's spirit  
In happy time for her endured exile,  
For did he live she should not miss her merit.  
But he is dead, and though he were my brother,  
His death such store of cinders cannot cast  
My coals of love to quench: for though they smother  
The flames a while, yet will they out at last.  
Oh blest Arabia, in best climate placed,  
I by the fruit will censure of the tree: 270  
'Tis not in vain thy happy name thou hast,  
If all Arabians like Silleus be:  
Had not my fate been too too contrary,  
When I on Constabarus first did gaze,  
Silleus had been object to mine eye:  
Whose looks and personage must all eyes amaze.  
But now, ill-fated Salome, thy tongue  
To Constabarus by itself is tied:  
And now, except I do the Hebrew wrong,

250 Joseph slew: Josephus was the uncle of Herod and  
Salome, and Salome's first husband; see above, 'The  
Argument', paras 3-4

253 suspicion's: eds (suspicious Q)

259 boot: use

261 style: name, title

262-3 Herod's spirit . . . exile: i.e. 'luckily for Mariam, Herod  
is dead' (Wright)

264 she should . . . merit: she would get what she deserved

270 fruit . . . tree: allusion to Matthew 7.20: 'Wherefore by  
their fruits ye shall know them'; see too Matthew 7.17-19

272 Silleus: chief minister to King Obodas of Arabia

I cannot be the fair Arabian bride.  
 What childish lets are these? Why stand I now  
 On honourable points? 'Tis long ago  
 Since shame was written on my tainted brow,  
 And certain 'tis that shame is honour's foe.  
 Had I upon my reputation stood,  
 Had I affected an unspotted life,  
 Josephus' veins had still been stuffed with blood,  
 And I to him had lived a sober wife.  
 Then had I never cast an eye of love  
 On Constabarus' now detested face,  
 Then had I kept my thoughts without remove,  
 And blushed at motion of the least disgrace.  
 But shame is gone, and honour wiped away,  
 And impudency on my forehead sits:  
 She bids me work my will without delay,  
 And for my will I will employ my wits.  
 He loves, I love; what then can be the cause  
 Keeps me from being the Arabian's wife?  
 It is the principles of Moses' laws,  
 For Constabarus still remains in life.  
 If he to me did bear as earnest hate  
 As I to him, for him there were an ease:  
 A separating bill might free his fate  
 From such a yoke that did so much displease.  
 Why should such privilege to man be given?  
 Or given to them, why barred from women then?  
 Are men than we in greater grace with heaven?  
 Or cannot women hate as well as men?  
 I'll be the custom-breaker, and begin  
 To show my sex the way to freedom's door,  
 And with an offering will I purge my sin;  
 The law was made for none but who are poor.  
 If Herod had lived, I might to him accuse  
 My present lord. But for the future's sake,  
 Then would I tell the king he did refuse  
 The sons of Babas in his power to take.  
 But now I must divorce him from my bed,  
 That my Silleus may possess his room.  
 Had I not begged his life he had been dead;

281 lets: obstacles

281-2 stand . . . points?: why do I now insist on a strict code of honourable behaviour?

283 shame . . . brow: i.e. by a blush

292 motion: emotion

303 separating bill: i.e. a bill of divorcement; see Deuteronomy 24.1, which describes this as a male prerogative

315-16 he did refuse . . . take: rather than killing them, as Herod had ordered him to, Constabarus had hidden Babas' sons; see II.ii

319 Had I . . . dead: when Herod learnt of Constabarus' attempt to establish independence for Idumea, of which he was governor, he threatened to execute him. It was only Salome's pleading that saved him

280 I curse my tongue, the hind'rer of his doom; 320  
 But then my wand'ring heart to him was fast,  
 Nor did I dream of change. Silleus said,  
 He would be here, and see, he comes at last:  
 Had I not named him, longer had he stayed.

## Act I, scene v

SALOME, SILLEUS

290 SILLEUS Well found, fair Salome, Judea's pride.  
 Hath thy innated wisdom found the way  
 To make Silleus deem him deified,  
 By gaining thee, a more than precious prey?

SALOME I have devised the best I can devise;  
 A more imperfect means was never found, 330  
 But what cares Salome? It doth suffice  
 If our endeavours with their end be crowned.

In this our land we have an ancient use,  
 Permitted first by our law-giver's head:  
 Who hates his wife, though for no just abuse,  
 May with a bill divorce her from his bed.  
 But in this custom women are not free,  
 Yet I for once will wrest it; blame not thou  
 The ill I do, since what I do's for thee,  
 Though others blame, Silleus should allow. 340

SILLEUS Thinks Salome, Silleus hath a tongue  
 To censure her fair actions? Let my blood  
 Bedash my proper brow, for such a wrong,  
 The being yours, can make even vices good:

310 Arabia joy, prepare thy earth with green,  
 Thou never happy wert indeed till now:  
 Now shall thy ground be trod by beauty's queen,  
 Her foot is destined to depress thy brow.

Thou shalt, fair Salome, command as much  
 As if the royal ornament were thine: 350  
 The weakness of Arabia's king is such,  
 The kingdom is not his so much as mine:  
 My mouth is our Obodas' oracle,  
 Who thinks not aught but what Silleus will.  
 And thou rare creature, Asia's miracle,  
 Shalt be to me as it: Obodas still.

SALOME 'Tis not for glory I thy love accept,  
 Judea yields me honour's worthy store;  
 Had not affection in my bosom crept,  
 My native country should my life deplore. 360  
 Were not Silleus he with whom I go,  
 I would not change my Palestine for Rome;  
 Much less would I, a glorious state to show,  
 Go far to purchase an Arabian tomb.

SILLEUS Far be it from Silleus so to think;

326 innated: innate

334 law-giver's head: i.e. Moses

343 proper: own

360 deplore: grieve over

I know it is thy gratitude requites  
 The love that is in me, and shall not shrink  
 Till death do sever me from earth's delights.  
 SALOME But whist: methinks the wolf is in our talk.  
 Be gone, Silleus. Who doth here arrive? 370  
 'Tis Constabarus that doth hither walk;  
 I'll find a quarrel, him from me to drive.  
 SILLEUS Farewell; but were it not for thy command,  
 In his despite Silleus here would stand.

*Exit***Act I, scene vi**

SALOME, CONSTABARUS

CONSTABARUS Oh Salome, how much you wrong your  
 name,  
 Your race, your country, and your husband most!  
 A stranger's private conference is shame;  
 I blush for you, that have your blushing lost.  
 Oft have I found, and found you to my grief,  
 Consorted with this base Arabian here; 380  
 Heaven knows that you have been my comfort chief,  
 Then do not now my greater plague appear.  
 Now by the stately carved edifice  
 That on Mount Sion makes so fair a show,  
 And by the altar fit for sacrifice,  
 I love thee more than thou thyself dost know.  
 Oft with a silent sorrow have I heard  
 How ill Judea's mouth doth censure thee,  
 And did I not thine honour much regard,  
 Thou shouldst not be exhorted thus for me. 390  
 Didst thou but know the worth of honest fame,  
 How much a virtuous woman is esteemed,  
 Thou wouldst like hell eschew deserved shame,  
 And seek to be both chaste and chastely deemed.  
 Our wisest prince did say, and true he said,  
 A virtuous woman crowns her husband's head.  
 SALOME Did I for this uprear thy low estate?  
 Did I for this requital beg thy life,  
 That thou hadst forfeited to hapless fate,  
 To be to such a thankless wretch the wife? 400  
 This hand of mine hath lifted up thy head,  
 Which many a day ago had fallen full low,  
 Because the sons of Babas are not dead;  
 To me thou dost both life and fortune owe.  
 CONSTABARUS You have my patience often exercised;

Use make my choler keep within the banks.  
 Yet boast no more, but be by me advised:  
 A benefit upbraided, forfeits thanks.  
 I prithee Salome, dismiss this mood,  
 Thou dost not know how ill it fits thy place: 410  
 My words were all intended for thy good,  
 To raise thine honour and to stop disgrace.  
 SALOME To stop disgrace? Take thou no care for me,  
 Nay do thy worst, thy worst I set not by.  
 No shame of mine is like to light on thee,  
 Thy love and admonitions I defy.  
 Thou shalt no hour longer call me wife;  
 Thy jealousy procures my hate so deep  
 That I from thee do mean to free my life,  
 By a divorcing bill before I sleep. 420  
 CONSTABARUS Are Hebrew women now transformed  
 to men?  
 Why do you not as well our battles fight,  
 And wear our armour? Suffer this, and then  
 Let all the world be topsy-turved quite.  
 Let fishes graze, beasts swim, and birds descend,  
 Let fire burn downwards whilst the earth aspires,  
 Let winter's heat and summer's cold offend,  
 Let thistles grow on vines, and grapes on briars,  
 Set us to spin or sow, or at the best  
 Make us wood-hewers, water-bearing wights: 430  
 For sacred service let us take no rest,  
 Use us as Joshua did the Gibonites.  
 SALOME Hold on your talk, till it be time to end,  
 For me I am resolved it shall be so:  
 Though I be first that to this course do bend,  
 I shall not be the last, full well I know.  
 CONSTABARUS Why then be witness heav'n, the judge  
 of sins,  
 Be witness spirits that eschew the dark,  
 Be witness angels, witness cherubins,  
 Whose semblance sits upon the holy Ark; 440  
 Be witness earth, be witness Palestine,  
 Be witness David's City, if my heart  
 Did ever merit such an act of thine,  
 Or if the fault be mine that makes us part.  
 Since mildest Moses, friend unto the Lord,  
 Did work his wonders in the land of Ham,  
 And slew the first-born babes without a sword,  
 In sign whereof we eat the holy lamb,  
 Till now that fourteen hundred years are past,

369 whist: hush

377 conference: conversation

383-4 stately . . . show: the temple of Jerusalem

395 wisest prince: Solomon; see Proverbs 12.4

399 to: eds (omitted Q); its inclusion renders the line  
 metrically regular. Other eds punctuate thus: ' . . .  
 forfeited? Hapless fate/To be . . . the wife!'406 make: Q. Some eds emend to 'makes' or 'made', but it  
 makes sense thus if read as 'May use [i.e. habit] . . .'

414 set not by: care not for

432 Joshua . . . Gibonites: Joshua condemned the Gibeonites  
 to perpetual servitude for their attempt to deceive him;  
 see Joshua 9440 Ark: the Ark of the Covenant which held the tablets on  
 which were written the Ten Commandments

446 land of Ham: i.e. Egypt

Since first the law with us hath been in force: 450  
 You are the first, and will, I hope, be last,  
 That ever sought her husband to divorce.  
 SALOME I mean not to be led by precedent;  
 My will shall be to me instead of law.  
 CONSTABARUS I fear me much you will too late repent,  
 That you have ever lived so void of awe.  
 This is Silleus' love that makes you thus  
 Reverse all order; you must next be his.  
 But if my thoughts aright the cause discuss,  
 In winning you, he gains no lasting bliss; 460  
 I was Silleus, and not long ago  
 Josephus then was Constabarus now:  
 When you became my friend you proved his foe,  
 As now for him you break to me your vow.  
 SALOME If once I loved you, greater is your debt,  
 For certain 'tis that you deserved it not.  
 And undeservèd love we soon forget,  
 And therefore that to me can be no blot.  
 But now fare ill my once belovèd lord, 469  
 Yet never more beloved than now abhorred. *Exit*  
 CONSTABARUS Yet Constabarus biddeth thee farewell.  
 Farewell light creature. Heaven forgive thy sin.  
 My prophesying spirit doth foretell  
 Thy wavering thoughts do yet but new begin.  
 Yet I have better 'scaped than Joseph did,  
 But if our Herod's death had been delayed,  
 The valiant youths that I so long have hid,  
 Had been by her, and I for them, betrayed.  
 Therefore in happy hour did Caesar give  
 The fatal blow to wanton Antony: 480  
 For had he lived, our Herod then should live,  
 But great Antonius' death made Herod die.  
 Had he enjoyed his breath, not I alone  
 Had been in danger of a deadly fall,  
 But Mariam had the way of peril gone,  
 Though by the tyrant most beloved of all:  
 The sweet-faced Mariam, as free from guilt  
 As heaven from spots; yet had her lord come back  
 Her purest blood had been unjustly spilt,  
 And Salome it was would work her wrack. 490  
 Though all Judea yield her innocent, *Exit*  
 She often hath been near to punishment.

CHORUS  
 Those minds that wholly dote upon delight,  
 Except they only joy in inward good,  
 Still hope at last to hop upon the right,  
 And so from sand they leap in loathsome mud.  
 Fond wretches, seeking what they cannot find,  
 For no content attends a wavering mind.

450 law: i.e. the law of Moses  
 494 Except: unless  
 497 Fond: foolish

If wealth they do desire, and wealth attain,  
 Then wondrous fain would they to honour leap; 500  
 If mean degree they do in honour gain,  
 They would but wish a little higher step.  
 Thus step to step and wealth to wealth they add,  
 Yet cannot all their plenty make them glad.  
 Yet oft we see that some in humble state,  
 Are cheerful, pleasant, happy, and content,  
 When those indeed that are of higher state,  
 With vain additions do their thoughts torment.  
 Th'one would to his mind his fortune bind,  
 Th'other to his fortune frames his mind. 510  
 To wish variety is sign of grief,  
 For if you like your state as now it is,  
 Why should an alteration bring relief?  
 Nay, change would then be feared as loss of bliss.  
 That man is only happy in his fate  
 That is delighted in a settled state.  
 Still Mariam wished she from her lord were free,  
 For expectation of variety;  
 Yet now she sees her wishes prosperous be,  
 She grieves, because her lord so soon did die. 520  
 Who can those vast imaginations feed,  
 Where in a property contempt doth breed?  
 Were Herod now perchance to live again,  
 She would again as much be grieved at that;  
 All that she may, she ever doth disdain,  
 Her wishes guide her to she knows not what.  
 And sad must be their looks, their honour sour,  
 That care for nothing being in their power.

## Act II, scene i

PHERORAS and GRAPHINA

PHERORAS 'Tis true Graphina, now the time draws nigh  
 Wherein the holy priest with hallowed right,  
 The happy long-desirèd knot shall tie,  
 Pheroras and Graphina to unite.  
 How oft have I with lifted hands implored  
 This blessèd hour, till now implored in vain,  
 Which hath my wishèd liberty restored,

500 fain: eagerly  
 501 If: eds (Of Q)  
 522 in a property: regarding something already possessed  
 528 being: that is  
 SD PHERORAS and GRAPHINA: the sub-plot concerning  
 Pheroras (Herod's younger brother) and the slave girl is  
 mentioned only briefly in Cary's source, the Jewish  
 historian Josephus's *The Antiquities*, translated by  
 Thomas Lodge in 1602; the name Graphina is Cary's  
 invention. In 'Graphina' she invents a name that seems to  
 allude to the Greek for writing, *graphesis*; for a discussion  
 of the name see Ferguson 1991: 237-8

And made my subject self my own again.  
 Thy love, fair maid, upon mine eye doth sit,  
 Whose nature hot doth dry the moisture all, 10  
 Which were in nature and in reason fit  
 For my monarchal brother's death to fall.  
 Had Herod lived, he would have plucked my hand  
 From fair Graphina's palm perforce, and tied  
 The same in hateful and despisèd band,  
 For I had had a baby to my bride:  
 Scarce can her infant tongue with easy voice  
 Her name distinguish to another's ear;  
 Yet had he lived, his power, and not my choice,  
 Had made me solemnly the contract swear. 20  
 Have I not cause in such a change to joy?  
 What though she be my niece, a princess born?  
 Near blood's without respect, high birth a toy,  
 Since love can teach us blood and kindred's scorn.  
 What bootèd it that he did raise my head,  
 To be his realm's co-partner, kingdom's mate?  
 Withal, he kept Graphina from my bed,  
 More wished by me than thrice Judea's state.  
 Oh, could not he be skilful judge in love,  
 That doted so upon his Mariam's face? 30  
 He, for his passion, Doris did remove;  
 I needed not a lawful wife displace.  
 It could not be but he had power to judge,  
 But he that never grudged a kingdom's share,  
 This well-known happiness to me did grudge,  
 And meant to be therein without compare.  
 Else had I been his equal in love's host,  
 For though the diadem on Mariam's head  
 Corrupt the vulgar judgements, I will boast  
 Graphina's brow's as white, her cheeks as red. 40  
 Why speaks thou not, fair creature? Move thy tongue,  
 For silence is a sign of discontent:  
 It were to both our loves too great a wrong  
 If now this hour do find thee sadly bent.  
 GRAPHINA Mistake me not my lord; too oft have I  
 Desired this time to come with wingèd feet,  
 To be enwrapped with grief when 'tis too nigh.  
 You know my wishes ever yours did meet:  
 If I be silent, 'tis no more but fear 50  
 That I should say too little when I speak.  
 But since you will my imperfections bear,  
 In spite of doubt I will my silence break;  
 Yet might amazement tie my moving tongue,  
 But that I know before Pheroras' mind.  
 I have admirèd your affection long,

16 baby to my bride: Pheroras was engaged to one of Herod's young daughters

24 us: absent in Q; editorial addition to regularise metre

44 bent: inclined

54 But: except

55 admirèd: wondered at

And cannot yet therein a reason find.  
 Your hand hath lifted me from lowest state  
 To highest eminency, wondrous grace,  
 And me, your handmaid, have you made your mate,  
 Though all but you alone do count me base. 60  
 You have preserved me pure at my request,  
 Though you so weak a vassal might constrain  
 To yield to your high will; then last not best  
 In my respect a princess you disdain;  
 Then need not all these favours study crave,  
 To be requited by a simple maid?  
 And study still you know must silence have,  
 Then be my cause for silence justly weighed,  
 But study cannot boot, nor I requite, 70  
 Except your lowly handmaid's steadfast love  
 And fast obedience may your mind delight;  
 I will not promise more than I can prove.  
 PHERORAS That study needs not let Graphina smile,  
 And I desire no greater recompense.  
 I cannot vaunt me in a glorious style,  
 Nor show my love in far-fetched eloquence:  
 But this believe me, never Herod's heart  
 Hath held his prince-born beauty-famèd wife  
 In nearer place than thou, fair virgin, art, 80  
 To him that holds the glory of his life.  
 Should Herod's body leave the sepulchre,  
 And entertain the severed ghost again,  
 He should not be my nuptial hinderer,  
 Except he hindered it with dying pain.  
 Come fair Graphina, let us go in state,  
 This wish-endearèd time to celebrate.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene ii

CONSTABARUS *and* BABAS' SONS

BABAS' FIRST SON Now, valiant friend, you have our  
 lives redeemed,  
 Which lives, as saved by you, to you are due:  
 Command and you shall see yourself esteemed,  
 Our lives and liberties belong to you. 90  
 This twice six years, with hazard of your life,  
 You have concealed us from the tyrant's sword;  
 Though cruel Herod's sister were your wife,  
 You durst in scorn of fear this grace afford.  
 In recompense we know not what to say,  
 A poor reward were thanks for such a merit;  
 Our truest friendship at your feet we lay,  
 The best requital to a noble spirit.

71 fast: firm

73 let . . . smile: i.e. prevent Graphina's smile

81-2 Should Herod's . . . again: i.e. if Herod's body and soul were reunited

CONSTABARUS Oh how you wrong our friendship,  
 valiant youth:  
 With friends there is not such a word as debt; **100**  
 Where amity is tied with bond of truth,  
 All benefits are there in common set.  
 Then is the golden age with them renewed:  
 All names of properties are banished quite,  
 Division, and distinction, are eschewed,  
 Each hath to what belongs to others right.  
 And 'tis not sure so full a benefit,  
 Freely to give, as freely to require:  
 A bounteous act hath glory following it,  
 They cause the glory that the act desire. **110**  
 All friendship should the pattern imitate  
 Of Jesse's son and valiant Jonathan,  
 For neither sovereign's nor father's hate  
 A friendship fixed on virtue sever can.  
 Too much of this; 'tis written in the heart,  
 And needs no amplifying with the tongue:  
 Now may you from your living tomb depart,  
 Where Herod's life hath kept you over long.  
 Too great an injury to a noble mind,  
 To be quick buried; you had purchased fame **120**  
 Some years ago, but that you were confined,  
 While thousand meaner did advance their name.  
 Your best of life, the prime of all your years,  
 Your time of action is from you bereft.  
 Twelve winters have you overpassed in fears:  
 Yet if you use it well, enough is left.  
 And who can doubt but you will use it well?  
 The sons of Babas have it by descent,  
 In all their thoughts each action to excel,  
 Boldly to act, and wisely to invent. **130**

BABAS' SECOND SON Had it not like the hateful cuckoo  
 been,  
 Whose riper age his infant nurse doth kill,  
 So long we had not kept ourselves unseen,  
 But Constabarus safely crossed our will:  
 For had the tyrant fixed his cruel eye  
 On our concealèd faces, wrath had swayed  
 His justice so, that he had forced us die.  
 And dearer price than life we should have paid,  
 For you our truest friend had fall'n with us,  
 And we, much like a house on pillars set, **140**  
 Had clean depressed our prop, and therefore thus

112 Jesse's son . . . Jonathan: i.e. David and Jonathan, types of male friendship; see 1 Samuel 18 to 2 Samuel 1

120 quick buried: buried alive

128 descent: heredity

131 hateful cuckoo: the cuckoo lays its eggs in other birds' nests, the young cuckoo then displaces the young of the resident birds

134 safely: some eds emend to 'safely'; the sense, however, is clear as it stands if 'safely' is taken as 'in the interests of safety'

Our ready will with our concealment met.  
 But now that you, fair lord, are dangerless,  
 The sons of Babas shall their rigour show,  
 And prove it was not baseness did oppress  
 Our hearts so long, but honour kept them low.  
 BABAS' FIRST SON Yet do I fear this tale of Herod's death  
 At last will prove a very tale indeed;  
 It gives me strongly in my mind, his breath  
 Will be preserved to make a number bleed. **150**  
 I wish not therefore to be set at large,  
 Yet peril to myself I do not fear:  
 Let us for some days longer be your charge,  
 Till we of Herod's state the truth do hear.  
 CONSTABARUS What, art thou turned a coward, noble  
 youth,  
 That thou beginst to doubt undoubted truth?  
 BABAS' FIRST SON Were it my brother's tongue that  
 cast this doubt,  
 I from his heart would have the question out  
 With this keen falchion, but 'tis you, my lord,  
 Against whose head I must not lift a sword: **160**  
 I am so tied in gratitude.  
 CONSTABARUS Believe  
 You have no cause to take it ill;  
 If any word of mine your heart did grieve  
 The word dissented from the speaker's will.  
 I know it was not fear the doubt begun,  
 But rather valour and your care of me:  
 A coward could not be your father's son.  
 Yet know I doubts unnecessary be:  
 For who can think that in Antonius' fall,  
 Herod his bosom friend should 'scape unbruised? **170**  
 Then, Caesar, we might thee an idiot call,  
 If thou by him shouldst be so far abused.  
 BABAS' SECOND SON Lord Constabarus, let me tell you  
 this,  
 Upon submission Caesar will forgive:  
 And therefore though the tyrant did amiss,  
 It may fall out that he will let him live.  
 Not many years ago it is since I,  
 Directed thither by my father's care,  
 In famous Rome for twice twelve months did lie,  
 My life from Hebrews' cruelty to spare. **180**  
 There, though I were but yet of boyish age,  
 I bent mine eye to mark, mine ears to hear,  
 Where I did see Octavius, then a page,  
 When first he did to Julius' sight appear:

149 It gives . . . mind: i.e. I have a presentiment

152 fear: eds (leare Q); Purkiss emends to 'leer' (i.e. 'look askance at')

159 falchion: curved broadsword

179 lie: eds (live Q)

183 Octavius: Octavius (later Caesar Augustus), great-nephew of Julius Caesar

184 Julius: Julius Caesar

Methought I saw such mildness in his face,  
 And such a sweetness in his looks did grow  
 Withal, commixed with so majestic grace,  
 His phys'nomy his fortune did foreshow.  
 For this I am indebted to mine eye,  
 But then mine ear received more evidence, **190**  
 By that I knew his love to clemency,  
 How he with hottest cholera could dispense.  
 CONSTABARUS But we have more than barely heard the  
 news,  
 It hath been twice confirmed. And though some tongue  
 Might be so false with false report t'abuse,  
 A false report hath never lasted long.  
 But be it so that Herod have his life,  
 Concealment would not then a whit avail:  
 For certain 'tis, that she that was my wife  
 Would not to set her accusation fail. **200**  
 And therefore now as good the venture give  
 And free ourselves from blot of cowardice,  
 As show a pitiful desire to live,  
 For, who can pity but they must despise?  
 BABAS' FIRST SON I yield, but to necessity I yield;  
 I dare upon this doubt engage mine arm,  
 That Herod shall again this kingdom wield,  
 And prove his death to be a false alarm.  
 BABAS' SECOND SON I doubt it too; God grant it be an  
 error.  
 'Tis best without a cause to be in terror: **210**  
 And rather had I, though my soul be mine,  
 My soul should lie, than prove a true divine.  
 CONSTABARUS Come, come, let fear go seek a dastard's  
 nest,  
 Undaunted courage lies in a noble breast.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene iii

DORIS *and* ANTIPATER

DORIS You royal buildings bow your lofty side,  
 And stoop to her that is by right your queen;  
 Let your humility upbraid the pride  
 Of those in whom no due respect is seen.  
 Nine times have we with trumpets' haughty sound,  
 And banishing sour leaven from our taste, **220**  
 Observed the feast that takes the fruit from ground,

188 phys'nomy: physiognomy; i.e. facial features, especially  
 when taken to reveal character

206 doubt: suspicion, fear

209 doubt: fear, suspect

212 divine: prophet

213 dastard's: ignoble coward's

215 You: eds (Your Q)

220-1 banishing sour leaven . . . ground: references to the  
 Jewish feast of Passover

Since I, fair city, did behold thee last;  
 So long it is since Mariam's purer cheek  
 Did rob from mine the glory; and so long  
 Since I returned my native town to seek,  
 And with me nothing but the sense of wrong.  
 And thee my boy, whose birth though great it were,  
 Yet have thy after fortunes proved but poor.  
 When thou wert born, how little did I fear  
 Thou shouldst be thrust from forth thy father's door.  
 Art thou not Herod's right begotten son? **231**  
 Was not the hapless Doris Herod's wife?  
 Yes: ere he had the Hebrew kingdom won,  
 I was companion to his private life.  
 Was I not fair enough to be a queen?  
 Why, ere thou wert to me, false monarch, tied,  
 My lake of beauty might as well be seen,  
 As after I had lived five years thy bride.  
 Yet then thine oaths came pouring like the rain,  
 Which all affirmed my face without compare: **240**  
 And that if thou mightst Doris' love obtain,  
 For all the world besides thou didst not care.  
 Then was I young, and rich, and nobly born,  
 And therefore worthy to be Herod's mate;  
 Yet thou ungrateful cast me off with scorn,  
 When Heaven's purpose raised your meaner fate.  
 Oft have I begged for vengeance for this fact,  
 And with dejected knees, aspiring hands,  
 Have prayed the highest power to enact  
 The fall of her that on my trophy stands. **250**  
 Revenge I have according to my will,  
 Yet where I wished this vengeance did not light:  
 I wished it should high-hearted Mariam kill,  
 But it against my whilom lord did fight.  
 With thee sweet boy I came, and came to try  
 If thou before his bastards might be placed  
 In Herod's royal seat and dignity.  
 But Mariam's infants here are only graced,  
 And now for us there doth no hope remain.  
 Yet we will not return till Herod's end **260**  
 Be more confirmed; perchance he is not slain.  
 So glorious fortunes may my boy attend,  
 For if he live, he'll think it doth suffice  
 That he to Doris shows such cruelty:  
 For as he did my wretched life despise,  
 So do I know I shall despised die.  
 Let him but prove as natural to thee  
 As cruel to thy miserable mother;  
 His cruelty shall not upbraided be  
 But in thy fortunes. I his faults will smother. **270**

237 lake: Q; some eds emend to 'lack'

250 trophy: a structure erected as a memorial of a victory in  
 war; here used figuratively in relation to Mariam's  
 triumph over Doris for Herod

254 whilom: former

ANTIPATER Each mouth within the city loudly cries  
That Herod's death is certain; therefore we  
Had best some subtle hidden plot devise,  
That Mariam's children might subverted be,  
By poison's drink, or else by murderous knife,  
So we may be advanced, it skills not how:  
They are but bastards, you were Herod's wife,  
And foul adultery blotteth Mariam's brow.

DORIS They are too strong to be by us removed,  
Or else revenge's foulest spotted face 280  
By our detested wrongs might be approved,  
But weakness must to greater power give place.  
But let us now retire to grieve alone,  
For solitariness best fitteth moan.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene iv

SILLEUS *and* CONSTABARUS

SILLEUS Well met Judean lord, the only wight  
Silleus wished to see. I am to call  
Thy tongue to strict account.

CONSTABARUS For what despite  
I ready am to hear, and answer all.  
But if directly at the cause I guess  
That breeds this challenge, you must pardon me, 290  
And now some other ground of fight profess,  
For I have vowed, vows must unbroken be.

SILLEUS What may be your exception? Let me know.  
CONSTABARUS Why, aught concerning Salome; my  
sword

Shall not be wielded for a cause so low,  
A blow for her my arm will scorn t'afford.

SILLEUS It is for slandering her unspotted name;  
And I will make thee, in thy vow's despite,  
Suck up the breath that did my mistress blame,  
And swallow it again to do her right. 300

CONSTABARUS I prithee give some other quarrel ground  
To find beginning: rail against my name,  
Or strike me first, or let some scarlet wound  
Inflame my courage, give me words of shame;  
Do thou our Moses' sacred laws disgrace,  
Deprave our nation, do me some despite:  
I'm apt enough to fight in any case,  
But yet for Salome I will not fight.

SILLEUS Nor I for aught but Salome: my sword  
That owes his service to her sacred name  
Will not an edge for other cause afford;  
In other fight I am not sure of fame. 310

CONSTABARUS For her, I pity thee enough already,  
For her, I therefore will not mangle thee:  
A woman with a heart so most unsteady,

Will of herself sufficient torture be.  
I cannot envy for so light a gain,  
Her mind with such unconstancy doth run:  
As with a word thou didst her love obtain,  
So with a word she will from thee be won. 320

So light as her possessions for most day  
Is her affections lost, to me 'tis known:  
As good go hold the wind as make her stay,  
She never loves, but till she call her own.  
She merely is a painted sepulchre,  
That is both fair, and vilely foul at once:  
Though on her outside graces garnish her,  
Her mind is filled with worse than rotten bones.  
And ever ready lifted is her hand,  
To aim destruction at a husband's throat: 330  
For proofs, Josephus and myself do stand,  
Though once on both of us she seemed to dote.  
Her mouth, though serpent-like it never hisses,  
Yet like a serpent, poisons where it kisses.

SILLEUS Well, Hebrew, well, thou bark'st, but wilt not  
bite.

CONSTABARUS I tell thee still for her I will not fight.

SILLEUS Why then, I call thee coward.

CONSTABARUS From my heart  
I give thee thanks. A coward's hateful name  
Cannot to valiant minds a blot impart,  
And therefore I with joy receive the same. 340  
Thou know'st I am no coward: thou wert by  
At the Arabian battle th'other day,  
And saw'st my sword with daring valiancy  
Amongst the faint Arabians cut my way.  
The blood of foes no more could let it shine,  
And 'twas enamellèd with some of thine.  
But now have at thee: not for Salome  
I fight, but to discharge a coward's style.  
Here 'gins the fight that shall not parted be,  
Before a soul or two endure exile. *They fight*

SILLEUS Thy sword hath made some windows for my  
blood, 351  
To show a horrid crimson phys'nomy.  
To breathe for both of us methinks 'twere good;  
The day will give us time enough to die.

321-2 So light as . . . 'tis known: the syntax of these lines is slightly obscure, but the general sense is 'her affections are inconstant, and change daily, as I know'

325 painted sepulchre: i.e. one professedly righteous but inwardly wicked; a hypocrite; see Matthew 23.27: 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness'

341 by: nearby

348 style: name

352 phys'nomy: see II.ii.r88n

276 skills: matters

293 exception: eds (expectation Q)



CONSTABARUS With all my heart take breath; thou shalt have time,

And if thou list, a twelvemonth; let us end.  
Into thy cheeks there doth a paleness climb,  
Thou canst not from my sword thyself defend.  
What needest thou for Salome to fight?

Thou hast her, and mayst keep her; none strives for her: 360

I willingly to thee resign my right,  
For in my very soul I do abhor her.  
Thou seest that I am fresh, unwounded yet,  
Then not for fear I do this offer make:  
Thou art with loss of blood to fight unfit,  
For here is one, and there another take.

SILLEUS I will not leave, as long as breath remains  
Within my wounded body: spare your words.  
My heart in blood's stead courage entertains;  
Salome's love no place for fear affords. 370

CONSTABARUS Oh could thy soul but prophesy like mine,

I would not wonder thou shouldst long to die:  
For Salome, if I a right divine,  
Will be than death a greater misery.

SILLEUS Then list, I'll breathe no longer.

CONSTABARUS Do thy will; *They fight*  
I hateless fight, and charitably kill.  
Pity thyself, Silleus, let not death  
Intrude before his time into thy heart.  
Alas it is too late to fear: his breath  
Is from his body now about to part. 380  
How far'st thou, brave Arabian?

SILLEUS Very well.

My leg is hurt, I can no longer fight.  
It only grieves me that so soon I fell,  
Before fair Salome's wrongs I came to right.

CONSTABARUS Thy wounds are less than mortal. Never fear,

Thou shalt a safe and quick recovery find.  
Come, I will thee unto my lodging bear;  
I hate thy body, but I love thy mind.

SILLEUS Thanks, noble Jew, I see a courteous foe;  
Stern enmity to friendship can no art. 390  
Had not my heart and tongue engaged me so,  
I would from thee no foe, but friend depart.  
My heart to Salome is tied too fast  
To leave her love for friendship, yet my skill  
Shall be employed to make your favour last,  
And I will honour Constabarus still.

CONSTABARUS I ope my bosom to thee, and will take

Thee in, as friend, and grieve for thy complaint;  
But if we do not expedition make,  
Thy loss of blood I fear will make thee faint. 400  
*Exeunt*

CHORUS

To hear a tale with ears prejudicate,  
It spoils the judgement, and corrupts the sense;  
That human error given to every state,  
Is greater enemy to innocence.

It makes us foolish, heady, rash, unjust;  
It makes us never try before we trust.

It will confound the meaning, change the words,  
For it our sense of hearing much deceives;  
Besides no time to judgement it affords,  
To weigh the circumstance our ear receives. 410  
The ground of accidents it never tries,  
But makes us take for truth ten thousand lies.

Our ears and hearts are apt to hold for good  
That we ourselves do most desire to be:  
And then we drown objections in the flood  
Of partiality; 'tis that we see  
That makes false rumours long with credit past,  
Though they like rumours must conclude as last.

The greatest part of us prejudicate,  
With wishing Herod's death do hold it true; 420  
The being once deluded doth not bate  
The credit to a better likelihood due.  
Those few that wish it not, the multitude  
Do carry headlong, so they doubts conclude.

They not object the weak uncertain ground,  
Whereon they built this tale of Herod's end,  
Whereof the author scarcely can be found,  
And all because their wishes that way bend.  
They think not of the peril that ensu'th,  
If this should prove the contrary to truth. 430

On this same doubt, on this so light a breath,  
They pawn their lives, and fortunes. For they all  
Behave them as the news of Herod's death  
They did of most undoubted credit call.  
But if their actions now do rightly hit,  
Let them commend their fortune, not their wit.

SD *They fight*: this appears as part of Constabarus's speech in Q; 'I, I, they fight'

390 Stern enmity . . . art: i.e. no art can turn stern enmity to friendship

393 too: eds (so Q)

399 expedition: haste

414 That: that which

421 bate: abate

425 They: i.e. the minority who doubted the rumour

426 they: i.e. the majority who circulated the rumour

435 hit: prove to be right, succeed

**Act III, scene i**

PHERORAS, SALOME

PHERORAS Urge me no more Graphina to forsake,  
Not twelve hours since I married her for love;  
And do you think a sister's power can make  
A resolute decree so soon remove?

SALOME Poor minds they are that honour not affects.

PHERORAS Who hunts for honour, happiness neglects.

SALOME You might have been both of felicity  
And honour too in equal measure seized.PHERORAS It is not you can tell so well as I,  
What 'tis can make me happy, or displeased. 10SALOME To match for neither beauty nor respects  
One mean of birth, but yet of meaner mind,  
A woman full of natural defects,  
I wonder what your eye in her could find.PHERORAS Mine eye found loveliness, mine ear found  
wit,

To please the one, and to enchant the other;  
Grace on her eye, mirth on her tongue doth sit,  
In looks a child, in wisdom's house a mother.

SALOME But say you thought her fair, as none thinks  
else,

Knows not Pheroras, beauty is a blast, 20  
Much like this flower which to day excels,  
But longer than a day it will not last.

PHERORAS Her wit exceeds her beauty.

SALOME Wit may show  
The way to ill as well as good, you know.PHERORAS But wisdom is the porter of her head,  
And bars all wicked words from issuing thence.SALOME But of a porter, better were you sped,  
If she against their entrance made defence.PHERORAS But wherefore comes the sacred Ananell,  
That hitherward his hasty steps doth bend? 30  
Great sacrificer, y'are arrivèd well,  
Ill news from holy mouth I not attend.**Act III, scene ii**

PHERORAS, SALOME, ANANELL

ANANELL My lips, my son, with peaceful tidings  
blessed,

Shall utter honey to your list'ning ear:  
A word of death comes not from priestly breast,  
I speak of life: in life there is no fear.  
And for the news I did the heavens salute,

5 honour not affects: i.e. that does not aspire to honour

20 blast: i.e. transient, like a puff of wind

25 porter: gatekeeper

27 were you sped: would you fare

32 attend: expect

And filled the temple with my thankful voice:  
For though that mourning may not me pollute,  
At pleasing accidents I may rejoice. 40

PHERORAS Is Herod then revived from certain  
death?SALOME What? Can your news restore my brother's  
breath?ANANELL Both so, and so: the king is safe and sound,  
And did such grace in royal Caesar meet,  
That he with larger style than ever crowned,  
Within this hour Jerusalem will greet.

I did but come to tell you, and must back  
To make preparatives for sacrifice:  
I knew his death your hearts like mine did rack,  
Though to conceal it proved you wise. *Exit*

SALOME How can my joy sufficiently appear? 51

PHERORAS A heavier tale did never pierce mine ear.

SALOME Now Salome of happiness may boast.

PHERORAS But now Pheroras is in danger most.

SALOME I shall enjoy the comfort of my life.

PHERORAS And I shall lose it, losing of my wife.

SALOME Joy heart, for Constabarus shall be slain.

PHERORAS Grieve soul, Graphina shall from me be  
ta'en.

SALOME Smile cheeks, the fair Silleus shall be mine.

PHERORAS Weep eyes, for I must with a child combine.

SALOME Well brother, cease your moans; on one  
condition 61

I'll undertake to win the king's consent:  
Graphina still shall be in your tuition,  
And her with you be ne'er the less content.

PHERORAS What's the condition? Let me quickly  
know,

That I as quickly your command may act:  
Were it to see what herbs in Ophir grow,  
Or that the lofty Tyrus might be sacked.

SALOME 'Tis not so hard a task. It is no more 70  
But tell the king that Constabarus hid  
The sons of Babas, done to death before;  
And 'tis no more than Constabarus did.  
And tell him more that I for Herod's sake,  
Not able to endure our brother's foe,  
Did with a bill our separation make,

60 combine: marry; see II.i.16n

63 tuition: protection

67 Ophir: a region noted in the Old Testament as a source  
of gold68 Tyrus: the city of Tyre, a wealthy Phoenician trading  
port celebrated for its beauty and power

71 done: some eds suggest emending to 'doomed'

73 I: eds (he Q)

74 our: eds (his Q). Editors differ in the emendments they  
make in this and with regard to the previous line, though  
they all agree that the sense demands some change. We  
follow Wright's changes

Though loth from Constabarus else to go.  
 PHERORAS Believe this tale for told: I'll go from hence,  
 In Herod's ear the Hebrew to deface;  
 And I that never studied eloquence,  
 Do mean with eloquence this tale to grace. *Exit*  
 SALOME This will be Constabarus' quick dispatch, **81**  
 Which from my mouth would lesser credit find:  
 Yet shall he not decease without a match,  
 For Mariam shall not linger long behind.  
 First jealousy; if that avail not, fear  
 Shall be my minister to work her end:  
 A common error moves not Herod's ear,  
 Which doth so firmly to his Mariam bend.  
 She shall be chargèd with so horrid crime,  
 As Herod's fear shall turn his love to hate: **90**  
 I'll make some swear that she desires to climb,  
 And seeks to poison him for his estate.  
 I scorn that she should live my birth t'upbraid,  
 To call me base and hungry Edomite;  
 With patient show her cholera I betrayed,  
 And watched the time to be revenged by sleight.  
 Now tongue of mine with scandal load her name,  
 Turn hers to fountains, Herod's eyes to flame.  
 Yet first I will begin Pheroras' suit,  
 That he my earnest business may effect; **100**  
 And I of Mariam will keep me mute,  
 Till first some other doth her name detect.

*Enter SILLEUS' MAN*

Who's there? Silleus' man? How fares your lord,  
 That your aspects do bear the badge of sorrow?  
 SILLEUS' MAN He hath the marks of Constabarus' sword,  
 And for a while desires your sight to borrow.  
 SALOME My heavy curse the hateful sword pursue,  
 My heavier curse on the more hateful arm  
 That wounded my Silleus. But renew  
 Your tale again. Hath he no mortal harm? **110**  
 SILLEUS' MAN No sign of danger doth in him appear,  
 Nor are his wounds in place of peril seen:  
 He bids you be assured you need not fear,  
 He hopes to make you yet Arabia's queen.  
 SALOME Commend my heart to be Silleus' charge;  
 Tell him my brother's sudden coming now  
 Will give my foot no room to walk at large,  
 But I will see him yet ere night, I vow.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene iii

MARIAM *and* SOHEMUS

MARIAM Sohemus, tell me what the news may be  
 That makes your eyes so full, your cheeks so blue? **120**

102 detect: expose to scandal

SOHEMUS I know not how to call them. Ill for me  
 'Tis sure they are: not so I hope for you.

Herod—

MARIAM Oh, what of Herod?

SOHEMUS Herod lives.

MARIAM How! Lives? What, in some cave or forest  
 hid?

SOHEMUS Nay, back returned with honour. Caesar  
 gives

Him greater grace than e'er Antonius did.

MARIAM Foretell the ruin of my family,  
 Tell me that I shall see our city burned,  
 Tell me I shall a death disgraceful die,  
 But tell me not that Herod is returned. **130**

SOHEMUS Be not impatient madam, be but mild,  
 His love to you again will soon be bred.

MARIAM I will not to his love be reconciled,  
 With solemn vows I have forsworn his bed.

SOHEMUS But you must break those vows.

MARIAM I'll rather break  
 The heart of Mariam. Cursed is my fate.  
 But speak no more to me, in vain ye speak  
 To live with him I so profoundly hate.

SOHEMUS Great queen, you must to me your pardon  
 give,

Sohemus cannot now your will obey: **140**

If your command should me to silence drive,

It were not to obey, but to betray.

Reject and slight my speeches, mock my faith,

Scorn my observance, call my counsel nought:

Though you regard not what Sohemus saith,

Yet will I ever freely speak my thought.

I fear ere long I shall fair Mariam see

In woeful state, and by herself undone:

Yet for your issue's sake more temp'rate be,

The heart by affability is won. **150**

MARIAM And must I to my prison turn again?

Oh, now I see I was an hypocrite:

I did this morning for his death complain,

And yet do mourn, because he lives, ere night.

When I his death believed, compassion wrought,

And was the stickler 'twixt my heart and him;

But now that curtain's drawn from off my thought,

Hate doth appear again with visage grim,

And paints the face of Herod in my heart,

In horrid colours with detested look; **160**

Then fear would come, but scorn doth play her part,

And saith that scorn with fear can never brook.

I know I could enchain him with a smile,

And lead him captive with a gentle word.

I scorn my look should ever man beguile,

Or other speech than meaning to afford.

137 speak: i.e. urge me

166 other . . . afford: or say anything other than what I mean

Else Salome in vain might spend her wind,  
 In vain might Herod's mother whet her tongue:  
 In vain had they complotted and combined,  
 For I could overthrow them all ere long. 170  
 Oh what a shelter is mine innocence,  
 To shield me from the pangs of inward grief:  
 'Gainst all mishaps it is my fair defence,  
 And to my sorrows yields a large relief.  
 To be commandress of the triple earth,  
 And sit in safety, from a fall secure,  
 To have all nations celebrate my birth,  
 I would not that my spirit were impure.  
 Let my distressed state unpitied be,  
 Mine innocence is hope enough for me. *Exit*

SOHEMUS Poor guiltless queen. Oh that my wish might  
 place 181

A little temper now about thy heart:  
 Unbridled speech is Mariam's worst disgrace,  
 And will endanger her without desert.  
 I am in greater hazard. O'er my head,  
 The fatal axe doth hang unsteadily;  
 My disobedience once discovered,  
 Will shake it down: Sohemus so shall die.  
 For when the king shall find we thought his death  
 Had been as certain as we see his life, 190  
 And marks withal I slighted so his breath  
 As to preserve alive his matchless wife—  
 Nay more, to give to Alexander's hand  
 The regal dignity, the sovereign power,  
 How I had yielded up at her command  
 The strength of all the city, David's tower—  
 What more than common death may I expect,  
 Since I too well do know his cruelty?  
 'Twere death a word of Herod's to neglect,

175 triple earth: eds offer various glosses: the heavens, seas and underworld (Cerasano and Wynne-Davies); the known world, consisting of Europe, Asia and Africa (Fitzmaurice *et al.*); a reference to Antony's interest in her, Antony being one of the triumvirate who ruled Rome (Purkiss); and an allusive repetition of Mariam's comparison of herself with Cleopatra, as in I.ii.199–202 (Weller and Ferguson). Purkiss and Weller and Ferguson note a parallel with *Antony and Cleopatra* I.i.12, which it almost certainly predates. Compare with the reference to 'the triple world' in Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness*, l. 240 and note

182 temper: moderation

186 fatal axe . . . unsteadily: reference to the sword of Damocles. Dionysius hung a sword by a single hair above Damocles' head to illustrate to him the instability of regal fortune

191 breath: command

193 Alexander's: some eds emend to 'Alexandra', but this seems unnecessary, given that Alexander is the name of Mariam's son; see the discussion between Mariam and Alexandra in I.ii

What then to do directly contrary? 200  
 Yet life I quit thee with a willing spirit,  
 And think thou could'st not better be employed:  
 I forfeit thee for her that more doth merit,  
 Ten such were better dead than she destroyed.  
 But fare thee well, chaste queen, well may I see  
 The darkness palpable, and rivers part;  
 The sun stand still, nay more, retorted be,  
 But never woman with so pure a heart.  
 Thine eyes' grave majesty keeps all in awe,  
 And cuts the wings of every loose desire; 210  
 Thy brow is table to the modest law,  
 Yet though we dare not love, we may admire.  
 And if I die, it shall my soul content,  
 My breath in Mariam's service shall be spent. *Exit*

## CHORUS

'Tis not enough for one that is a wife  
 To keep her spotless from an act of ill,  
 But from suspicion she should free her life,  
 And bare her self of power as well as will.  
 'Tis not so glorious for her to be free,  
 As by her proper self restrained to be. 220

When she hath spacious ground to walk upon,  
 Why on the ridge should she desire to go?  
 It is no glory to forbear alone  
 Those things that may her honour overthrow.  
 But 'tis thankworthy, if she will not take  
 All lawful liberties for honour's sake.

That wife her hand against her fame doth rear,  
 That more than to her lord alone will give  
 A private word to any second ear,  
 And though she may with reputation live, 230  
 Yet though most chaste, she doth her glory blot,  
 And wounds her honour, though she kills it not.

When to their husbands they themselves do bind,  
 Do they not wholly give themselves away?  
 Or give they but their body, not their mind,  
 Reserving that, though best, for others' prey?  
 No sure, their thoughts no more can be their own,  
 And therefore should to none but one be known.

206 darkness . . . part: reference to the one of the plagues of Egypt and to the parting of the Red Sea; see Exodus 10.21 and 14.21–2

207 retorted be: be turned back in its course; see Joshua 10.12–14

210 cuts the wings: allusion to Cupid, the winged god of love

211 table: i.e. tablet

218 bare: condenses sense of 'bar' as well as 'bare'

223 alone: only

236 prey: eds (pray Q). It would also be possible to read the line thus: ' . . . for others, pray?'

Then she usurps upon another's right,  
 That seeks to be by public language graced, 240  
 And though her thoughts reflect with purest light,  
 Her mind, if not peculiar, is not chaste.  
 For in a wife it is no worse to find  
 A common body, than a common mind.

And every mind though free from thought of ill,  
 That out of glory seeks a worth to show,  
 When any's ears but one therewith they fill,  
 Doth in a sort her pureness overthrow.  
 Now Mariam had, but that to this she bent,  
 Been free from fear, as well as innocent. 250

## Act IV, scene i

*Enter HEROD and his ATTENDANTS*

HEROD Hail happy city, happy in thy store,  
 And happy that thy buildings such we see;  
 More happy in the temple where w'adore,  
 But most of all that Mariam lives in thee.

*Enter NUNTIO*

Art thou returned? How fares my Mariam?  
 NUNTIO She's well my lord, and will anon be here  
 As you commanded.

HEROD Muffle up thy brow,  
 Thou day's dark taper. Mariam will appear,  
 And where she shines, we need not thy dim light.  
 Oh haste thy steps, rare creature, speed thy pace, 10  
 And let thy presence make the day more bright,  
 And cheer the heart of Herod with thy face.  
 It is an age since I from Mariam went,  
 Methinks our parting was in David's days:  
 The hours are so increased by discontent,  
 Deep sorrow, Joshua-like, the season stays.  
 But when I am with Mariam, time runs on:  
 Her sight can make months minutes, days of weeks,  
 An hour is then no sooner come than gone,  
 When in her face mine eye for wonders seeks. 20  
 You world-commanding city, Europe's grace,  
 Twice hath my curious eye your streets surveyed,  
 And I have seen the statue-fillèd place,  
 That once if not for grief had been betrayed.  
 I all your Roman beauties have beheld,

242 peculiar: private, exclusive to one person

249 but . . . bent: if not for her inclination to speak

1 store: plenty

5 Art . . . Mariam?: this line appears before the *sd* in *Q*

8 taper: candle, i.e. the sun

14 David's days: i.e. some thousand years ago

16 Joshua-like: see Joshua 10.12–13, where he makes the sun  
 and moon stand still

21 city: i.e. Rome

And seen the shows your aediles did prepare,  
 I saw the sum of what in you excelled,  
 Yet saw no miracle like Mariam rare.  
 The fair and famous Livia, Caesar's love,  
 The world's commanding mistress did I see, 30  
 Whose beauties both the world and Rome approve;  
 Yet Mariam, Livia is not like to thee.  
 Be patient but a little while, mine eyes  
 Within your compassed limits be contained:  
 That object straight shall your desires suffice,  
 From which you were so long a while restrained.  
 How wisely Mariam doth the time delay,  
 Lest sudden joy my sense should suffocate;  
 I am prepared, thou needst no longer stay.  
 Who's there? My Mariam, more than happy fate? 40  
 Oh no, it is Pheroras; welcome brother.  
 Now for a while, I must my passion smother.

## Act IV, scene ii

HEROD, PHERORAS

PHERORAS All health and safety wait upon my lord,  
 And may you long in prosperous fortunes live  
 With Rome-commanding Caesar at accord,  
 And have all honours that the world can give.

HEROD Oh brother, now thou speak'st not from thy  
 heart.

No, thou hast struck a blow at Herod's love,  
 That cannot quickly from my memory part,  
 Though Salome did me to pardon move. 50

Valiant Phasaelus, now to thee farewell,  
 Thou wert my kind and honourable brother;  
 Oh hapless hour, when you self-stricken fell,  
 Thou father's image, glory of thy mother.

Had I desired a greater suit of thee,  
 Than to withhold thee from a harlot's bed,  
 Thou wouldst have granted it; but now I see  
 All are not like that in a womb are bred.  
 Thou wouldst not, hadst thou heard of Herod's  
 death,

Have made his burial time thy bridal hour; 60  
 Thou wouldst with clamours, not with joyful breath,  
 Have showed the news to be not sweet but sour.

PHERORAS Phasaelus' great worth I know did stain  
 Pheroras' petty valour; but they lie  
 (Excepting you yourself) that dare maintain  
 That he did honour Herod more than I.  
 For what I showed, love's power constrained me  
 show,

26 aediles: officials in charge of supervising (amongst other  
 things) the city's public games

29 Livia: Livia Drusilla, wife of Caesar Augustus

51 Phasaelus: Herod's brother, who committed suicide  
 when taken prisoner of war

And pardon loving faults for Mariam's sake.

HEROD Mariam, where is she?

PHERORAS Nay, I do not know,  
But absent use of her fair name I make; 70  
You have forgiven greater faults than this,  
For Constabarus, that against your will  
Preserved the sons of Babas, lives in bliss,  
Though you commanded him the youths to kill.

HEROD Go, take a present order for his death,  
And let those traitors feel the worst of fears.  
Now Salome will whine to beg his breath,  
But I'll be deaf to prayers, and blind to tears.

PHERORAS He is, my lord, from Salome divorced,  
Though her affection did to leave him grieve; 80  
Yet was she by her love to you enforced  
To leave the man that would your foes relieve.

HEROD Then haste them to their death. (*Exit*  
PHERORAS) I will requite  
Thee gentle Mariam—Salome, I mean;  
The thought of Mariam doth so steal my spirit,  
My mouth from speech of her I cannot wean.

### Act IV, scene iii

HEROD, MARIAM

HEROD And here she comes indeed; happily met  
My best and dearest half. What ails my dear?  
Thou dost the difference certainly forget  
'T'wixt dusky habits and a time so clear.

MARIAM My lord, I suit my garment to my mind,  
And there no cheerful colours can I find.

HEROD Is this my welcome? Have I longed so much  
To see my dearest Mariam discontent?  
What is't that is the cause thy heart to touch?  
Oh speak, that I thy sorrow may prevent.  
Art thou not Jewry's queen, and Herod's too?  
Be my commandress, be my sovereign guide;  
To be by thee directed I will woo,  
For in thy pleasure lies my highest pride. 100  
Or if thou think Judea's narrow bound  
Too strict a limit for thy great command,  
Thou shalt be empress of Arabia crowned,  
For thou shalt rule, and I will win the land.  
I'll rob the holy David's sepulchre  
To give thee wealth, if thou for wealth do care:  
Thou shalt have all they did with him inter,  
And I for thee will make the temple bare.

MARIAM I neither have of power nor riches want,  
I have enough, nor do I wish for more;

75 present: immediate

90 habits: clothing

105 I'll rob . . . sepulchre: Josephus gives an account of  
Herod's raid on the tomb of Solomon and David after  
Mariam's death

Your offers to my heart no ease can grant,  
Except they could my brother's life restore.  
No, had you wished the wretched Mariam glad,  
Or had your love to her been truly tied,  
Nay, had you not desired to make her sad,  
My brother nor my grandsire had not died.

HEROD Wilt thou believe no oaths to clear thy lord?

How oft have I with execration sworn?  
Thou art by me belov'd, by me adored,  
Yet are my protestations heard with scorn. 120  
Hircanus plotted to deprive my head  
Of this long settled honour that I wear:  
And therefore I did justly doom him dead,  
To rid the realm from peril, me from fear.  
Yet I for Mariam's sake do so repent  
The death of one whose blood she did inherit:  
I wish I had a kingdom's treasure spent,  
So I had ne'er expelled Hircanus' spirit.  
As I affected that same noble youth,  
In lasting infamy my name enrol, 130  
If I not mourned his death with hearty truth.  
Did I not show to him my earnest love,  
When I to him the priesthood did restore?  
And did for him a living priest remove,  
Which never had been done but once before.

MARIAM I know that moved by importunity,  
You made him priest, and shortly after die.

HEROD I will not speak, unless to be believed,  
This froward humour will not do you good; 140  
It hath too much already Herod grieved,  
To think that you on terms of hate have stood.  
Yet smile my dearest Mariam, do but smile,  
And I will all unkind conceits exile.

MARIAM I cannot frame disguise, nor never taught  
My face a look dissenting from my thought.

HEROD By heav'n you vex me; build not on my love.

MARIAM I will not build on so unstable ground.

HEROD Nought is so fixed, but peevishness may move.

MARIAM 'Tis better slightest cause than none were  
found. 150

HEROD Be judge yourself, if ever Herod sought  
Or would be moved a cause of change to find;  
Yet let your look declare a milder thought,  
My heart again you shall to Mariam bind.  
How oft did I for you my mother chide,  
Revile my sister, and my brother rate,  
And tell them all my Mariam they belied;  
Distrust me still, if these be signs of hate.

128 Disruption to both the rhyme scheme and the sense at  
this point suggests that a line following this one may be  
missing

129 noble youth: i.e. Aristobolus

139 froward: peevish, rebellious

143 conceits: judgements, opinions; imaginings

155 rate: berate

## Act IV, scene iv

*Enter* BUTLER

HEROD What hast thou here?

BUTLER A drink procuring love;  
The queen desired me to deliver it.MARIAM Did I? Some hateful practice this will prove,  
Yet can it be no worse than heavens permit. 161HEROD Confess the truth, thou wicked instrument  
To her outrageous will; 'tis poison sure;  
Tell true, and thou shalt 'scape the punishment  
Which if thou do conceal thou shalt endure.BUTLER I know not, but I doubt it be no less,  
Long since the hate of you her heart did cease.

HEROD Know'st thou the cause thereof?

BUTLER My lord, I guess  
Sohemus told the tale that did displease.HEROD Oh heaven! Sohemus false! Go, let him die, 170  
Stay not to suffer him to speak a word: *Exit* BUTLEROh damnèd villain, did he falsify  
The oath he swore ev'n of his own accord?  
Now do I know thy falsehood, painted devil,  
Thou white enchantress. Oh thou art so foul,  
That hyssop cannot cleanse thee, worst of evil.  
A beauteous body hides a loathsome soul.  
Your love, Sohemus, moved by his affection,  
Though he have ever heretofore been true,  
Did blab forsooth, that I did give direction, 180  
If we were put to death, to slaughter you.  
And you in black revenge attended now  
To add a murder to your breach of vow.

MARIAM Is this a dream?

HEROD Oh heaven, that t'were no  
more;I'll give my realm to who can prove it so.  
I would I were like any begger poor,  
So I for false my Mariam did not know.  
Foul pith contained in the fairest rind  
That ever graced a cedar. Oh thine eye  
Is pure as heaven, but impure thy mind, 190  
And for impurity shall Mariam die.  
Why didst thou love Sohemus?MARIAM They can tell  
That say I loved him; Mariam says not so.HEROD Oh, cannot impudence the coals expel  
That for thy love in Herod's bosom glow;  
It is as plain as water, and denial  
Makes of thy falsehood but a greater trial.Hast thou beheld thyself, and couldst thou stain  
So rare perfection? Even for love of thee  
I do profoundly hate thee. Wert thou plain, 200  
Thou shouldst the wonder of Judea be.  
But oh, thou art not. Hell itself lies hid  
Beneath thy heavenly show. Yet wert thou chaste,  
Thou mightst exalt, pull down, command, forbid,  
And be above the wheel of fortune placed.  
Hadst thou complotted Herod's massacre,  
That so thy son a monarch might be styled,  
Not half so grievous such an action were,  
As once to think, that Mariam is defiled.  
Bright workmanship of nature sullied o'er 210  
With pitchèd darkness now thine end shall be:  
Thou shalt not live, fair fiend, to cozen more,  
With heav'nly semblance, as thou coz'ndest me.  
Yet must I love thee in despite of death,  
And thou shalt die in the despite of love:  
For neither shall my love prolong thy breath,  
Nor shall thy loss of breath my love remove.  
I might have seen thy falsehood in thy face:  
Where couldst thou get thy stars that served for eyes  
Except by theft, and theft is foul disgrace? 220  
This had appeared before, were Herod wise,  
But I'm a sot, a very sot, no better;  
My wisdom long ago a-wand'ring fell;  
Thy face encount'ring it, my wit did fetter,  
And made me for delight my freedom sell.  
Give me my heart, false creature; 'tis a wrong  
My guiltless heart should now with thine be slain;  
Thou hadst no right to lock it up so long,  
And with usurper's name, I Mariam stain.*Enter* BUTLERHEROD Have you designed Sohemus to his end? 230  
BUTLER I have, my lord.HEROD Then call our royal guard  
To do as much for Mariam. (*Exit* BUTLER) They  
offend  
Leave ill unblamed, or good without reward. 190*Enter* SOLDIERSHere, take her to her death. Come back, come back;  
What, meant I to deprive the world of light,  
To muffle Jewry in the foulest black,  
That ever was an opposite to white?  
Why, whither would you carry her?SOLDIER You bade  
We should conduct her to her death, my lord.

160 practice: plot

163 poison: eds (passion Q). The emendment is made on the  
grounds of both sense and the account given in Josephus;  
some eds retain 'passion'

176 hyssop: herb used in Jewish ceremonial purification

182 attended: waited

203 Yet wert: eds (Yet never wert Q); on the grounds of  
sense and metre we follow Purkiss and Cerasano and  
Wynne-Davies in this emendation

213 heav'nly: eds (heavy Q)

232-3 They offend/Leave: i.e. they offend who leave

HEROD Why, sure I did not, Herod was not mad; 240  
 Why should she feel the fury of the sword?  
 Oh, now the grief returns into my heart,  
 And pulls me piecemeal: love and hate do fight;  
 And now hath love acquired the greater part,  
 Yet now hath hate, affection conquered quite.  
 And therefore bear her hence; and Hebrew, why  
 Seize you with lion's paws the fairest lamb  
 Of all the flock? She must not, shall not, die;  
 Without her I most miserable am.  
 And with her more than most; away, away, 250  
 But bear her but to prison, not to death.  
 And is she gone indeed? Stay, villains, stay;  
 Her looks alone preserved your sovereign's breath.  
 Well, let her go; but yet she shall not die;  
 I cannot think she meant to poison me.  
 But certain 'tis she lived too wantonly,  
 And therefore shall she never more be free.

*Exeunt*

### Act IV, scene v

BUTLER

BUTLER Foul villain, can thy pitchy-coloured soul  
 Permit thine ear to hear her causeless doom,  
 And not enforce thy tongue that tale control, 260  
 That must unjustly bring her to her tomb?  
 Oh Salome, thou hast thyself repaid  
 For all the benefits that thou hast done;  
 Thou art the cause I have the queen betrayed,  
 Thou hast my heart to darkest falsehood won.  
 I am condemned, heav'n gave me not my tongue  
 To slander innocents, to lie, deceive,  
 To be the hateful instrument to wrong,  
 The earth of greatest glory to bereave.  
 My sin ascends and doth to heaven cry, 270  
 It is the blackest deed that ever was;  
 And there doth sit an angel notary  
 That doth record it down, in leaves of brass.  
 Oh how my heart doth quake. Achitophel,  
 Thou foundst a means thyself from shame to free;  
 And sure my soul approves thou didst not well;  
 All follow some, and I will follow thee.

*Exit*

259 causeless: eds (caules Q)  
 275 Thou foundst . . . free: Achitophel was a counsellor to David and plotted his overthrow with Absalom, David's son. Achitophel hanged himself when Absalom disregarded his advice; see 2 Samuel 17.23

### Act IV, scene vi

CONSTABARUS, BABAS' SONS, and their GUARD

CONSTABARUS Now here we step our last, the way to death,  
 We must not tread this way a second time;  
 Yet let us resolutely yield our breath, 280  
 Death is the only ladder, heav'n to climb.

BABAS' FIRST SON With willing mind I could myself resign,

But yet it grieves me with a grief untold,  
 Our death should be accompanied with thine,  
 Our friendship we to thee have dearly sold.

CONSTABARUS Still wilt thou wrong the sacred name of friend?

Then shouldst thou never style it friendship more,  
 But base mechanic traffic that doth lend,  
 Yet will be sure they shall the debt restore.

I could with needless compliment return, 290  
 'Tis for thy ceremony, I could say,

'Tis I that made the fire your house to burn,  
 For but for me she would not you betray.

Had not the damnèd woman sought mine end,  
 You had not been the subject of her hate;

You never did her hateful mind offend,  
 Nor could your deaths have freed her nuptial fate.

Therefore fair friends, though you were still unborn,  
 Some other subtlety devised should be,

Whereby my life, though guiltless, should be torn; 300  
 Thus have I proved, 'tis you that die for me.

And therefore should I weakly now lament,  
 You have but done your duties; friends should die

Alone, their friends' disaster to prevent,  
 Though not compelled by strong necessity.

But now farewell fair city, never more  
 Shall I behold your beauty shining bright;

Farewell, of Jewish men the worthy store,  
 But no farewell to any female wight.

You wavering crew: my curse to you I leave, 310  
 You had but one to give you any grace,

And you yourselves will Mariam's life bereave;  
 Your commonwealth doth innocency chase.

You creatures made to be the human curse,  
 You tigers, lionesses, hungry bears,

Tear-massacring hyenas; nay, far worse,  
 For they for prey do shed their feignèd tears,

287 style: call

288 base . . . traffic: low commercial transaction

289 they: i.e. those who borrow

297 her: Weller and Ferguson (your Q). We follow Weller and Ferguson's emendation

310 wavering crew: i.e. women

316 Tear-massacring hyenas: hyenas were said to produce tears as they devoured their prey



But you will weep (you creatures cross to good)  
 For your unquenched thirst of human blood.  
 You were the angels cast from heav'n for pride, 320  
 And still do keep your angels' outward show,  
 But none of you are inly beautified,  
 For still your heav'n-depriving pride doth grow.  
 Did not the sins of man require a scourge,  
 Your place on earth had been by this withstood;  
 But since a flood no more the world must purge,  
 You stayed in office of a second flood.  
 You giddy creatures, sowers of debate,  
 You'll love today, and for no other cause  
 But for you yesterday did deeply hate; 330  
 You are the wreck of order, breach of laws.  
 Your best are foolish, froward, wanton, vain,  
 Your worst, adulterous, murderous, cunning, proud,  
 And Salome attends the latter train,  
 Or rather she their leader is allowed.  
 I do the sottishness of men bewail,  
 That do with following you enhance your pride:  
 'Twere better that the human race should fail,  
 Than be by such a mischief multiplied.  
 Cham's servile curse to all your sex was given, 340  
 Because in Paradise you did offend;  
 Then do we not resist the will of heaven,  
 When on your wills like servants we attend?  
 You are to nothing constant but to ill,  
 You are with nought but wickedness indued;  
 Your loves are set on nothing but your will,  
 And thus my censure I of you conclude.  
 You are the least of goods, the worst of evils,  
 Your best are worse than men, your worst than devils.  
 BABAS' SECOND SON Come, let us to our death; are we  
 not blest? 350  
 Our death will freedom from these creatures give,  
 Those trouble-quiet sowers of unrest;  
 And this I vow, that had I leave to live,  
 I would for ever lead a single life,  
 And never venture on a devilish wife.

*Exeunt*

318 cross to: opposed to

324 man: eds (many Q)

325 by this: by now

326 a flood . . . purge: see Genesis 9.11

327 in office of: in place of

332 froward: see IV.iii.139n

340-1 Cham's . . . offend: these lines conflate two Old Testament curses: 1) Cham or (Ham), the son of Noah, was condemned to servitude when he brought his brothers to see their father drunk and naked, instead of covering him; see Genesis 9.22, 25; 2) the curse of Eve for her transgression in Eden; see Genesis 3.16

**Act IV, scene vii**HEROD *and* SALOME

HEROD Nay, she shall die. Die, quoth you; that she shall;

But for the means. The means! Methinks 'tis hard  
 To find a means to murder her withal,  
 Therefore I am resolved she shall be spared.

SALOME Why, let her be beheaded.

HEROD That were well;

Think you that swords are miracles like you? 361

Her skin will every curt-lax-edge refel,

And then your enterprise you well may rue.

What if the fierce Arabian notice take,

Of this your wretched weaponless estate:

They answer, when we bid resistance make,

That Mariam's skin their falchions did rebate.

Beware of this; you make a goodly hand,

If you of weapons do deprive our land.

SALOME Why, drown her then.

HEROD Indeed a sweet device;

Why, would not every river turn her course 371

Rather than do her beauty prejudice,

And be reverted to the proper source?

So not a drop of water should be found

In all Judea's quondam fertile ground.

SALOME Then let the fire devour her.

HEROD 'Twill not be;

Flame is from her derived into my heart:

Thou nursest flame, flame will not murder thee,

My fairest Mariam, fullest of desert.

SALOME Then let her live for me.

HEROD Nay, she shall die;

But can you live without her?

SALOME Doubt you that? 381

HEROD I'm sure I cannot; I beseech you try.

I have experience but I know not what.

SALOME How should I try?

HEROD Why, let my love be slain;

But if we cannot live without her sight

You'll find the means to make her breathe again,

Or else you will bereave my comfort quite.

SALOME Oh aye, I warrant you. *Exit*

HEROD What, is she gone,

And gone to bid the world be overthrown?

What, is her heart's composure hardest stone? 390

To what a pass are cruel women grown?

362 curt-lax: variant of curtal-ax (cutlass): a short, broad sword  
 refel: repulse367 falchions: see II.ii.159n  
 rebate: blunt

375 quondam: once

377 derived: conducted

380 for me: as far as I am concerned

Enter SALOME

She is returned already; have you done?  
 Is't possible you can command so soon  
 A creature's heart to quench the flaming sun,  
 Or from the sky to wipe away the moon?  
 SALOME If Mariam be the sun and moon, it is,  
 For I already have commanded this.  
 HEROD But have you seen her cheek?  
 SALOME A thousand times.  
 HEROD But did you mark it too?  
 SALOME Aye, very well.  
 HEROD What is't?  
 SALOME A crimson bush, that ever limes 400  
 The soul whose foresight doth not much excel.  
 HEROD Send word she shall not die. Her cheek a  
 bush—  
 Nay, then I see indeed you marked it not.  
 SALOME 'Tis very fair, but yet will never blush,  
 Though foul dishonours do her forehead blot.  
 HEROD Then let her die, 'tis very true indeed,  
 And for this fault alone shall Mariam bleed.  
 SALOME What fault, my lord?  
 HEROD What fault is't? You that  
 ask,  
 If you be ignorant, I know of none,  
 To call her back from death shall be your task; 410  
 I'm glad that she for innocent is known.  
 For on the brow of Mariam hangs a fleece  
 Whose slenderest twine is strong enough to bind  
 The hearts of kings; the pride and shame of Greece,  
 Troy-flaming Helen's, not so fairly shined.  
 SALOME 'Tis true indeed, she lays them out for nets,  
 To catch the hearts that do not shun a bait;  
 'Tis time to speak, for Herod sure forgets  
 That Mariam's very tresses hide deceit.  
 HEROD Oh, do they so? Nay, then you do but well; 420  
 In sooth I thought it had been hair.  
 Nets call you them? Lord, how they do excel;  
 I never saw a net that showed so fair.  
 But have you heard her speak?  
 SALOME You know I have.  
 HEROD And were you not amazed?  
 SALOME No, not a whit.  
 HEROD Then 'twas not her you heard; her life I'll save,  
 For Mariam hath a world-amazing wit.

399 mark: note

400 limes: ensnares, as with birdlime (a sticky substance used to trap birds)

412 fleece: hair; probably also alludes to the highly prized Golden Fleece of Colchis

415 Troy . . . Helen: the recovery of Helen, who had eloped with (or was abducted by) Paris, prince of Troy, was the ostensible object of the Trojan War. Troy was eventually burnt down by the Greeks in revenge

SALOME She speaks a beauteous language, but within  
 Her heart is false as powder; and her tongue  
 Doth but allure the auditors to sin, 430  
 And is the instrument to do you wrong.  
 HEROD It may be so; nay, 'tis so: she's unchaste;  
 Her mouth will ope to every stranger's ear.  
 Then let the executioner make haste,  
 Lest she enchant him, if her words he hear.  
 Let him be deaf, lest she do him surprise  
 That shall to free her spirit be assigned.  
 Yet what boots deafness if he have his eyes?  
 Her murderer must be both deaf and blind.  
 For if he see, he needs must see the stars 440  
 That shine on either side of Mariam's face,  
 Whose sweet aspect will terminate the wars,  
 Wherewith he should a soul so precious chase.  
 Her eyes can speak, and in their speaking move;  
 Oft did my heart with reverence receive  
 The world's mandates. Pretty tales of love  
 They utter, which can human bondage weave.  
 But shall I let this heaven's model die,  
 Which for a small self-portraiture she drew?  
 Her eyes like stars, her forehead like the sky, 450  
 She is like heaven, and must be heavenly true.  
 SALOME Your thoughts do rave with doting on the  
 queen:  
 Her eyes are ebon-hued, and you'll confess  
 A sable star hath been but seldom seen;  
 Then speak of reason more, of Mariam less.  
 HEROD Yourself are held a goodly creature here,  
 Yet so unlike my Mariam in your shape,  
 That when to her you have approachèd near,  
 Myself hath often ta'en you for an ape.  
 And yet you prate of beauty; go your ways, 460  
 You are to her a sunburnt blackamoor;  
 Your paintings cannot equal Mariam's praise,  
 Her nature is so rich, you are so poor.  
 Let her be stayed from death, for if she die,  
 We do we know not what to stop her breath;  
 A world cannot another Mariam buy.  
 Why stay you lingering? Countermand her death.  
 SALOME Then you'll no more remember what hath  
 passed;  
 Sohemus' love and hers shall be forgot.  
 'Tis well in truth: that fault may be her last, 470  
 And she may mend, though yet she love you not.  
 HEROD Oh God, 'tis true: Sohemus. Earth and heav'n,  
 Why did you both conspire to make me cursed,

429 powder: either a) gunpowder, noted for its volatility; or b) cosmetic powder

449 she: i.e. heaven

454 sable: heraldic term for 'black'

462 paintings: effects achieved with cosmetics

465 to stop her breath: in stopping her breath

In coz'ning me with shows, and proofs unev'n?  
 She showed the best, and yet did prove the worst.  
 Her show was such, as had our singing king,  
 The holy David, Mariam's beauty seen,  
 The Hittite had then felt no deadly sting,  
 Nor Bethsabe had never been a queen.  
 Or had his son, the wisest man of men, 480  
 Whose fond delight did most consist in change,  
 Beheld her face, he had been stayed again;  
 No creature having her can wish to range.  
 Had Asuerus seen my Mariam's brow,  
 The humble Jew, she might have walked alone:  
 Her beauteous virtue should have stayed below,  
 Whiles Mariam mounted to the Persian throne.  
 But what avails it all? For in the weight  
 She is deceitful, light as vanity;  
 Oh, she was made for nothing but a bait,  
 To train some hapless man to misery.  
 I am the hapless man that have been trained  
 To endless bondage. I will see her yet.  
 Methinks I should discern her if she feigned;  
 Can human eyes be dazed by woman's wit?  
 Once more these eyes of mine with hers shall meet,  
 Before the headsman do her life bereave.  
 Shall I for ever part from thee, my sweet,  
 Without the taking of my latest leave?  
 SALOME You had as good resolve to save her now; 500  
 I'll stay her death, 'tis well determinèd:  
 For sure she never more will break her vow,  
 Sohemus and Josephus both are dead.  
 HEROD She shall not live, nor will I see her face;  
 A long-healed wound a second time doth bleed.  
 With Joseph I remember her disgrace;  
 A shameful end ensues a shameful deed.  
 Oh, that I had not called to mind anew  
 The discontent of Mariam's wavering heart;  
 'Twas you, you foul-mouthed Ate, none but you, 510  
 That did the thought hereof to me impart.

474 unev'n: unjust

476 singing king: David, author of the Psalms

478-9 The Hittite . . . queen: David had an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba ('Bethsabe'). When she became pregnant, he arranged for her husband, Uriah the Hittite, to be killed in battle so that he could marry her; see 2 Samuel 11

480-1 his son . . . change: Solomon was noted both for his wisdom and for his numerous wives and concubines; see 1 Kings 11.1-8

485 The humble Jew: Esther, noted for her beauty, became the second wife of Ahasuerus, the Persian king; see Esther 2

488 weight: scales

491 train: lure

501 determinèd: resolved

507 ensues: follows

510 Ate: daughter of Zeus, goddess of evil, who incites men to wickedness and strife

Hence from my sight, my black tormenter, hence;  
 For hadst not thou made Herod unsecure,  
 I had not doubted Mariam's innocence,  
 But still had held her in my heart for pure.  
 SALOME I'll leave you to your passion; 'tis no time  
 To purge me now, though of a guiltless crime. *Exit*  
 HEROD Destruction take thee; thou hast made my heart  
 As heavy as revenge. I am so dull,  
 Methinks I am not sensible of smart, 520  
 Though hideous horrors at my bosom pull.  
 My head weighs downwards; therefore will I go  
 To try if I can sleep away my woe. *Exit*

## Act IV, scene viii

490 MARIAM

MARIAM Am I the Mariam that presumed so much,  
 And deemed my face must needs preserve my breath?  
 Aye, I it was that thought my beauty such,  
 As it alone could countermand my death.  
 Now death will teach me: he can pale as well  
 A cheek of roses as a cheek less bright,  
 And dim an eye whose shine doth most excel, 530  
 As soon as one that casts a meaner light.  
 Had not myself against myself conspired,  
 No plot, no adversary from without,  
 Could Herod's love from Mariam have retired,  
 Or from his heart have thrust my semblance out.  
 The wanton queen that never loved for love,  
 False Cleopatra, wholly set on gain,  
 With all her sleights did prove, yet vainly prove,  
 For her the love of Herod to obtain.  
 Yet her allurements, all her courtly guile, 540  
 Her smiles, her favours, and her smooth deceit,  
 Could not my face from Herod's mind exile,  
 But were with him of less than little weight.  
 That face and person that in Asia late  
 For beauty's goddess, Paphos' queen, was ta'en:  
 That face that did captive great Julius' fate,  
 That very face that was Antonius' bane.  
 That face that to be Egypt's pride was born,  
 That face that all the world esteemed so rare,  
 Did Herod hate, despise, neglect, and scorn, 550  
 When with the same, he Mariam's did compare.  
 This made that I improvidently wrought,  
 And on the wager even my life did pawn;  
 Because I thought, and yet but truly thought,  
 That Herod's love could not from me be drawn.  
 But now, though out of time, I plainly see  
 It could be drawn, though never drawn from me;

538 prove: try

545 Paphos' queen: Venus, goddess of love and beauty, who, according to legend, rose from the sea near Paphos

Had I but with humility been graced,  
 As well as fair I might have proved me wise;  
 But I did think because I knew me chaste, 560  
 One virtue for a woman might suffice.  
 That mind for glory of our sex might stand,  
 Wherein humility and chastity  
 Doth march with equal paces hand in hand;  
 But one, if single seen, who setteth by?  
 And I had singly one, but 'tis my joy,  
 That I was ever innocent, though sour;  
 And therefore can they but my life destroy,  
 My soul is free from adversary's power.

*Enter* DORIS

You princes great in power, and high in birth, 570  
 Be great and high, I envy not your hap;  
 Your birth must be from dust, your power on earth;  
 In heav'n shall Mariam sit in Sara's lap.  
 DORIS In heav'n! Your beauty cannot bring you thither;  
 Your soul is black and spotted, full of sin:  
 You in adult'ry lived nine year together,  
 And heav'n will never let adult'ry in.  
 MARIAM What art thou that dost poor Mariam pursue?  
 Some spirit sent to drive me to despair,  
 Who sees for truth that Mariam is untrue? 580  
 If fair she be, she is as chaste as fair.

DORIS I am that Doris that was once beloved,  
 Beloved by Herod, Herod's lawful wife;  
 'Twas you that Doris from his side removed,  
 And robbed from me the glory of my life.

MARIAM Was that adult'ry? Did not Moses say  
 That he that being matched did deadly hate,  
 Might by permission put his wife away,  
 And take a more beloved to be his mate?

DORIS What did he hate me for? For simple truth? 590  
 For bringing beauteous babes for love to him?  
 For riches? Noble birth, or tender youth?  
 Or for no stain did Doris' honour dim?  
 Oh, tell me Mariam, tell me if you know,  
 Which fault of these made Herod Doris' foe.  
 These thrice three years have I with hands held up,  
 And bowèd knees fast nailèd to the ground,  
 Besought for thee the dregs of that same cup,  
 That cup of wrath that is for sinners found.  
 And now thou art to drink it: Doris' curse 600  
 Upon thyself did all this while attend,  
 But now it shall pursue thy children worse.

MARIAM Oh Doris, now to thee my knees I bend,

565 setteth by: takes account of

566 I . . . one: i.e. I had only one of the two virtues

573 Sara's: Sarah was the wife of Abraham and 'mother' of the Jewish people; 'Sara's lap' is a feminine equivalent to 'the bosom of Abraham' (i.e. 'heaven')

599 cup of wrath: see Isaiah 51.17 and Revelation 16.19

That heart that never bowed to thee doth bow.  
 Curse not mine infants, let it thee suffice  
 That heav'n doth punishment to me allow.  
 Thy curse is cause that guiltless Mariam dies.  
 DORIS Had I ten thousand tongues, and every tongue  
 Inflamed with poison's power and steeped in gall, 610  
 My curses would not answer for my wrong,  
 Though I in cursing thee employed them all.  
 Hear thou that didst Mount Gerarim command,  
 To be a place whereon with cause to curse:  
 Stretch thy revenging arm, thrust forth thy hand,  
 And plague the mother much, the children worse.  
 Throw flaming fire upon the baseborn heads  
 That were begotten in unlawful beds.

But let them live till they have sense to know  
 What 'tis to be in miserable state;  
 Then be their nearest friends their overthrow, 620  
 Attended be they by suspicious hate.  
 And Mariam, I do hope this boy of mine  
 Shall one day come to be the death of thine. *Exit*

MARIAM Oh, heaven forbid! I hope the world shall see  
 This curse of thine shall be returned on thee.  
 Now earth, farewell, though I be yet but young,  
 Yet I, methinks, have known thee too too long. *Exit*

CHORUS

The fairest action of our human life  
 Is scorning to revenge an injury:  
 For who forgives without a further strife, 630  
 His adversary's heart to him doth tie.  
 And 'tis a firmer conquest truly said,  
 To win the heart than overthrow the head.

If we a worthy enemy do find,  
 To yield to worth, it must be nobly done;  
 But if of baser metal be his mind,  
 In base revenge there is no honour won.  
 Who would a worthy courage overthrow,  
 And who would wrestle with a worthless foe?

We say our hearts are great and cannot yield; 640  
 Because they cannot yield it proves them poor.  
 Great hearts are tasked beyond their power but seld.  
 The weakest lion will the loudest roar.  
 Truth's school for certain doth this same allow,  
 High-heartedness doth sometimes teach to bow.

612 Mount Gerarim: probably refers to Mount Gerizim, paired with Mount Ebal. Moses told the Israelites that blessings should be pronounced from the former and curses from the latter; see Deuteronomy 27.12–13. Cary seems to have confused the two. Cerasano and Wynne-Davies note that Mount Gerizim was the peak on which Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac

642 seld: seldom. Q is punctuated thus: '. . . power, but seld/The weakest . . .'; we follow most eds in repunctuating in order that the sense fits the context

A noble heart doth teach a virtuous scorn:  
 To scorn to owe a duty over-long,  
 To scorn to be for benefits forborne,  
 To scorn to lie, to scorn to do a wrong,  
 To scorn to bear an injury in mind,  
 To scorn a free-born heart slave-like to bind.

But if for wrongs we needs revenge must have,  
 Then be our vengeance of the noblest kind.  
 Do we his body from our fury save,  
 And let our hate prevail against our mind?  
 What can 'gainst him a greater vengeance be,  
 Than make his foe more worthy far than he?

Had Mariam scorned to leave a due unpaid,  
 She would to Herod then have paid her love,  
 And not have been by sullen passion swayed.  
 To fix her thoughts all injury above  
 Is virtuous pride. Had Mariam thus been proved,  
 Long famous life to her had been allowed.

## Act V, scene i

NUNTIO

NUNTIO When, sweetest friend, did I so far offend  
 Your heavenly self, that you, my fault to quit,  
 Have made me now relator of her end,  
 The end of beauty, chastity and wit?  
 Was none so hapless in the fatal place  
 But I, most wretched, for the queen t'choose?  
 'Tis certain I have some ill-boding face  
 That made me culled to tell this luckless news.  
 And yet no news to Herod. Were it new  
 To him, unhappy't had not been at all.  
 Yet do I long to come within his vew,  
 That he may know his wife did guiltless fall;  
 And here he comes. Your Mariam greets you well.

Enter HEROD

HEROD What? Lives my Mariam? Joy, exceeding joy!  
 She shall not die.

NUNTIO Heav'n doth your will repel.

HEROD Oh do not with thy words my life destroy,  
 I prithee tell no dying tale: thine eye  
 Without thy tongue doth tell but too too much.  
 Yet let thy tongue's addition make me die;  
 Death welcome comes to him whose grief is such. 20

NUNTIO I went amongst the curious gazing troop,  
 To see the last of her that was the best,

648 forborne: treated leniently

653 noblest kind: Weller and Ferguson note that,  
 proverbially, forgiveness is the noblest form of revenge

658 a due: probably a reference to the mutual obligations  
 (often taken to be specifically sexual) of marriage: the  
 'marriage debt'; see 1 Corinthians 7.3-5

To see if death had heart to make her stoop,  
 To see the sun-admiring phoenix' nest.  
 When there I came, upon the way I saw  
 The stately Mariam not debased by fear;  
 Her look did seem to keep the world in awe,  
 Yet mildly did her face this fortune bear.

HEROD Thou dost usurp my right, my tongue was  
 framed

To be the instrument of Mariam's praise. 30  
 Yet speak: she cannot be too often famed:  
 All tongues suffice not her sweet name to raise.

NUNTIO But as she came she Alexandra met,  
 Who did her death (sweet queen) no whit bewail,  
 But as if nature she did quite forget,  
 She did upon her daughter loudly rail.

HEROD Why stopped you not her mouth? Where had  
 she words

To darken that, that heaven made so bright?  
 Our sacred tongue no epithet affords  
 To call her other than the world's delight. 40

NUNTIO She told her that her death was too too good,  
 And that already she had lived too long;  
 She said, she shamed to have a part in blood  
 Of her that did the princely Herod wrong.

HEROD Base pick-thank devil. Shame, 'twas all her glory,  
 That she to noble Mariam was the mother.

But never shall it live in any story:  
 Her name, except to infamy, I'll smother.  
 What answer did her princely daughter make?

NUNTIO She made no answer, but she looked the while,  
 As if thereof she scarce did notice take, 51  
 Yet smiled a dutiful, though scornful, smile.

HEROD Sweet creature, I that look to mind do call;  
 Full oft hath Herod been amazed withal.  
 Go on.

NUNTIO She came unmoved, with pleasant grace,  
 As if to triumph her arrival were,  
 In stately habit, and with cheerful face,  
 Yet every eye was moist but Mariam's there.

When justly opposite to me she came,  
 She picked me out from all the crew; 60  
 She beckoned to me, called me by my name,  
 For she my name, my birth, and fortune knew.

HEROD What did she name thee? Happy, happy man,  
 Wilt thou not ever love that name the better?  
 But what sweet tune did this fair dying swan

24 sun-admiring . . . nest: in Egyptian mythology, the  
 phoenix built itself a nest every five hundred years, on  
 which it consumed itself by fire and then rose, renewed,  
 from the ashes; hence, a symbol of Christ's resurrection

45 pick-thank: flattering

55 Go on: in Q<sub>2</sub> these words begin Nuntio's next speech

59 justly: precisely

65 swan: traditionally, swans were supposed to sing before  
 they died

Afford thine ear? Tell all, omit no letter.  
 NUNTIO 'Tell thou my lord,' said she—  
 HEROD Me, meant she me?  
 Is't true, the more my shame: I was her lord;  
 Were I not made her lord, I still should be;  
 But now her name must be by me adored. 70  
 Oh say, what said she more? Each word she said  
 Shall be the food whereon my heart is fed.  
 NUNTIO 'Tell thou my lord thou saw'st me lose my  
 breath.'  
 HEROD Oh, that I could that sentence now control.  
 NUNTIO 'If guiltily eternal be my death—'  
 HEROD I hold her chaste ev'n in my inmost soul.  
 NUNTIO 'By three days hence, if wishes could revive,  
 I know himself would make me oft alive.'  
 HEROD Three days; three hours, three minutes, not so  
 much,  
 A minute in a thousand parts divide; 80  
 My penitency for her death is such  
 As in the first I wished she had not died.  
 But forward in thy tale.  
 NUNTIO Why, on she went,  
 And after she some silent prayer had said,  
 She did as if to die she were content,  
 And thus to heav'n her heav'nly soul is fled.  
 HEROD But art thou sure there doth no life remain?  
 Is't possible my Mariam should be dead?  
 Is there no trick to make her breathe again?  
 NUNTIO Her body is divided from her head. 90  
 HEROD Why, yet methinks there might be found by art  
 Strange ways of cure; 'tis sure rare things are done  
 By an inventive head, and willing heart.  
 NUNTIO Let not, my lord, your fancies idly run.  
 It is as possible it should be seen  
 That we should make the holy Abraham live,  
 Though he entombed two thousand years had been,  
 As breath again to slaughtered Mariam give.  
 But now for more assaults prepare your ears.  
 HEROD There cannot be a further cause of moan; 100  
 This accident shall shelter me from fears.  
 What can I fear? Already Mariam's gone.  
 Yet tell ev'n what you will.  
 NUNTIO As I came by  
 From Mariam's death, I saw upon a tree  
 A man that to his neck a cord did tie,  
 Which cord he had designed his end to be.  
 When me he once discerned, he downwards bowed,  
 And thus with fearful voice he cried aloud,

69 Were . . . should be: punctuated as in Q. Some eds  
 emend to 'Were I not mad, her lord I still should be'  
 74 sentence: 'both utterance and death sentence' (Weller  
 and Ferguson)  
 82 first: i.e. the first thousandth of a minute  
 105 A man . . . tie: like Judas, following Christ's death; see  
 Matthew 27.3-5

'Go tell the king he trusted ere he tried;  
 I am the cause that Mariam causeless died.' 110  
 HEROD Damnation take him, for it was the slave  
 That said she meant with poison's deadly force  
 To end my life, that she the crown might have,  
 Which tale did Mariam from herself divorce.  
 Oh, pardon me, thou pure unspotted ghost,  
 My punishment must needs sufficient be,  
 In missing that content I valued most,  
 Which was thy admirable face to see.  
 I had but one inestimable jewel,  
 Yet one I had, no monarch had the like, 120  
 And therefore may I curse myself as cruel:  
 'Twas broken by a blow myself did strike.  
 I gazed thereon and never thought me blessed,  
 But when on it my dazzled eye might rest,  
 A precious mirror made by wondrous art,  
 I prized it ten times dearer than my crown,  
 And laid it up fast folded in my heart.  
 Yet I in sudden choler cast it down,  
 And pashed it all to pieces: 'twas no foe  
 That robbed me of it; no Arabian host, 130  
 Nor no Armenian guide, hath used me so,  
 But Herod's wretched self hath Herod crossed.  
 She was my graceful moiety; me accursed,  
 To slay my better half and save my worst.  
 But sure she is not dead, you did but jest  
 To put me in perplexity a while;  
 'Twere well indeed if I could so be dressed;  
 I see she is alive; methinks you smile.  
 NUNTIO If sainted Abel yet deceasèd be,  
 'Tis certain Mariam is as dead as he. 140  
 HEROD Why then go call her to me, bid her now  
 Put on fair habit, stately ornament,  
 And let no frown o'er shade her smoothest brow,  
 In her doth Herod place his whole content.  
 NUNTIO She'll come in stately weeds to please your  
 sense,  
 If now she come attired in robe of heaven;  
 Remember you yourself did send her hence,  
 And now to you she can no more be given.  
 HEROD She's dead, hell take her murderers; she was  
 fair,  
 Oh what a hand she had, it was so white, 150  
 It did the whiteness of the snow impair:  
 I never more shall see so sweet a sight.

109 he trusted . . . tried: i.e. he trusted others before he  
 attempted to find the truth; see Chorus 2, stanzas 1, 3  
 119 inestimable jewel: see Proverbs 31.10  
 129 pashed: smashed  
 133 moiety: half  
 137 dressed: chided  
 139 Abel: Adam's second son, murdered by Cain; thus a  
 figure of innocence slain, and a type of Christ  
 145 weeds: dress

NUNTIO 'Tis true, her hand was rare.  
 HEROD Her hand? Her hands:  
 She had not singly one of beauty rare,  
 But such a pair as here where Herod stands,  
 He dares the world to make to both compare.  
 Accursèd Salome, hadst thou been still,  
 My Mariam had been breathing by my side:  
 Oh never had I, had I had my will,  
 Sent forth command, that Mariam should have died.  
 But Salome, thou didst with envy vex, **161**  
 To see thyself outmatchèd in thy sex:  
 Upon your sex's forehead Mariam sat,  
 To grace you all like an imperial crown,  
 But you fond fool have rudely pushed thereat,  
 And proudly pulled your proper glory down.  
 One smile of hers, nay, not so much, a look  
 Was worth a hundred thousand such as you.  
 Judea, how canst thou the wretches brook  
 That robbed from thee the fairest of the crew? **170**  
 You dwellers in the now deprived land,  
 Wherein the matchless Mariam was bred,  
 Why grasp not each of you a sword in hand,  
 To aim at me your cruel sovereign's head?  
 Oh, when you think of Herod as your king,  
 And owner of the pride of Palestine,  
 This act to your remembrance likewise bring,  
 'Tis I have overthrown your royal line.  
 Within her purer veins the blood did run,  
 That from her grandam Sara she derived, **180**  
 Whose beldame age the love of kings hath won;  
 Oh, that her issue had as long been lived.  
 But can her eye be made by death obscure?  
 I cannot think but it must sparkle still;  
 Foul sacrilege to rob those lights so pure,  
 From out a temple made by heav'nly skill.  
 I am the villain that have done the deed,  
 The cruel deed, though by another's hand:  
 My word, though not my sword, made Mariam bleed,  
 Hircanus' grandchild died at my command, **190**  
 That Mariam that I once did love so dear,  
 The partner of my now detested bed.  
 Why shine you, sun, with an aspect so clear?  
 I tell you once again my Mariam's dead.  
 You could but shine, if some Egyptian blowse,  
 Or Ethiopian dowdy lose her life:  
 This was—then wherefore bend you not your  
 brows?—

161 vex: fret

169 brook: endure

180 grandam: female ancestor

181 beldame: a 'beldame' was a remote female ancestor;  
hence, here, 'grandmotherly'195–6 blowse . . . dowdy: a 'blowse' was a ruddy, fat-faced  
wench, a slattern; a 'dowdy' was a shabby, vulgar woman;  
the references are to Cleopatra

The king of Jewry's fair and spotless wife.  
 Deny thy beams, and moon, refuse thy light,  
 Let all the stars be dark, let Jewry's eye **200**  
 No more distinguish which is day and night,  
 Since her best birth did in her bosom die.  
 Those fond idolaters, the men of Greece,  
 Maintain these orbs are safely governèd,  
 That each within themselves have gods apiece,  
 By whom their steadfast course is justly led.  
 But were it so, as so it cannot be,  
 They all would put their mourning garments on:  
 Not one of them would yield a light to me,  
 To me that is the cause that Mariam's gone. **210**  
 For though they feign their Saturn melancholy,  
 Of sour behaviours, and of angry mood,  
 They feign him likewise to be just and holy,  
 And justice needs must seek revenge for blood.  
 Their Jove, if Jove he were, would sure desire  
 To punish him that slew so fair a lass:  
 For Leda's beauty set his heart on fire,  
 Yet she not half so fair as Mariam was.  
 And Mars would deem his Venus had been slain,  
 Sol to recover her would never stick, **220**  
 For if he want the power her life to gain,  
 Then physic's god is but an empiric.  
 The queen of love would storm for beauty's sake,  
 And Hermes too, since he bestowed her wit;  
 The night's pale light for angry grief would shake,  
 To see chaste Mariam die in age unfit.  
 But oh, I am deceived, she passed them all  
 In every gift, in every property;

204–6 these orbs . . . justly led: i.e. each planet is controlled  
by a single god. Herod refers to the planets by a mixture  
of Greek and Roman names211 feign: Weller and Ferguson note that the extant copies of  
Q are divided equally here and two lines below between  
'faine' (meaning feign) and 'fame'. Whilst both make  
sense, we follow Weller and Ferguson in adopting 'feign',  
since the emphasis of Herod's speech is on the fictional  
nature of these beliefsSaturn: Roman equivalent to Greek Kronos; the ruler of  
the gods until usurped by his son Zeus; the planet was  
associated with melancholy and a harsh wisdom215 Jove: ruler of the gods; also known as Zeus (Greek) or  
Jupiter (Roman)

217 Leda: seduced by Jove in the shape of a swan

219 Mars: Roman god of war (Ares in Greek mythology)  
Venus: Roman goddess of love (Aphrodite in Greek  
mythology)

220 Sol: the sun; Apollo

222 physic's god: Apollo, god of the sun and medicine  
empiric: quack, fraud

223 queen of love: Venus

224 Hermes: messenger of the gods, famed for his wit  
(Mercury in Roman mythology)

225 night's pale light: the moon

Her excellencies wrought her timeless fall,  
 And they rejoiced, not grieved, to see her die. 230  
 The Paphian goddess did repent her waste,  
 When she to one such beauty did allow;  
 Mercurius thought her wit his wit surpassed,  
 And Cynthia envied Mariam's brighter brow.  
 But these are fictions, they are void of sense,  
 The Greeks but dream, and dreaming falsehoods tell;  
 They neither can offend nor give defence,  
 And not by them it was my Mariam fell.  
 If she had been like an Egyptian black,  
 And not so fair, she had been longer lived; 240  
 Her overflow of beauty turnèd back,  
 And drowned the spring from whence it was derived.  
 Her heav'nly beauty 'twas that made me think  
 That it with chastity could never dwell;  
 But now I see that heav'n in her did link  
 A spirit and a person to excel.  
 I'll muffle up myself in endless night,  
 And never let mine eyes behold the light.  
 Retire thyself, vile monster, worse than he  
 That stained the virgin earth with brother's blood. 250  
 Still in some vault or den enclosed be,  
 Where with thy tears thou mayest beget a flood,  
 Which flood in time may drown thee; happy day  
 When thou at once shalt die and find a grave.  
 A stone upon the vault someone shall lay,  
 Which monument shall an inscription have.  
 And these shall be the words it shall contain:  
 'Here Herod lies, that hath his Mariam slain.'

*Exeunt*

CHORUS

Whoever hath beheld with steadfast eye  
 The strange events of this one only day, 260  
 How many were deceived? How many die,  
 That once today did grounds of safety lay?  
 It will from them all certainty bereave,  
 Since twice six hours so many can deceive.

This morning Herod held for surely dead,  
 And all the Jews on Mariam did attend;  
 And Constabarus rise from Salom's bed,  
 And neither dreamed of a divorce or end.  
 Pheroras joyed that he might have his wife,  
 And Babas' sons for safety of their life. 270

Tonight our Herod doth alive remain,  
 The guiltless Mariam is deprived of breath;  
 Stout Constabarus both divorced and slain,  
 The valiant sons of Babas have their death.  
 Pheroras sure his love to be bereft,  
 If Salome her suit unmade had left.

Herod this morning did expect with joy,  
 To see his Mariam's much beloved face;  
 And yet ere night he did her life destroy,  
 And surely thought she did her name disgrace. 280  
 Yet now again, so short do humours last,  
 He both repents her death and knows her chaste.

Had he with wisdom now her death delayed,  
 He at his pleasure might command her death;  
 But now he hath his power so much betrayed,  
 As all his woes cannot restore her breath.  
 Now doth he strangely, lunaticly rave,  
 Because his Mariam's life he cannot save.

This day's events were certainly ordained  
 To be the warning to posterity: 290  
 So many changes are therein contained,  
 So admirably strange variety.  
 This day alone, our sagest Hebrews shall  
 In after times the school of wisdom call.

FINIS

231 Paphian goddess: Venus

234 Cynthia: goddess of the moon (Diana in Roman mythology)

246 person: body

249–50 he/That . . . blood: i.e. Cain, who killed his brother Abel; see Genesis 4.8–16

258 'Here . . . slain': compare the final lines of *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

260 one only day: reference to the classical dramatic unity of time, which stated that a play's action should take place within a single day. The other unities were of action (there should be nothing extraneous to the main plot), and of place (the action should be limited to a single location). These principles derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*, and were expanded by Italian and French critics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

281 humours: moods



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## Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Blackness*

First performed 1605

First published 1608

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*The Masque of Blackness* was performed before the court of King James on Twelfth Night, 1605, the culmination of the Christmas festivities. It is difficult to gain a sense of the occasion simply from the sparse dialogue, stage directions and commentary that are all that now remain of this ephemeral entertainment. Fortunately, however, there are many contemporary accounts of this and other masques which give a clearer idea of, particularly, their visual impact – for these were, in all senses, spectacular events. As was usual with masques, the performance of *The Masque of Blackness* was characterised by elaborate stage design, apparatus and costumes, the result of Jonson's first collaboration with the architect Inigo Jones, and cost in the region of £3,000 (an enormous sum for the time – John Chamberlain records, for example, that Lady Cope rented a house in Drury Lane, London, for £30 a year; see Thomson 1965).

Also typical was the masque's highly symbolic mythological narrative framework which closed in a choreographed dance in which the masquers and audience came together, symbolically dissolving the distinction between them and ensuring that the piece was resolved in a magnificent demonstration of courtly harmony and unity – though, as David Lindley reminds us, this was invariably followed by the less dignified feasting and dancing that was the real high point of the evening (Lindley 1995: x).

Characteristically, too, the chief masquers were drawn from the court itself, and, whilst they did not have speaking parts (these being reserved for professional actors), they nonetheless constituted the focal point of the performance. In this case, Queen Anne and eleven of her closest female companions from the court occupied this position, taking the roles of the daughters of Niger, their faces and forearms blackened to represent twelve Ethiopian beauties in search of the land (subsequently revealed to be England) where the beams of the never-setting sun (King James) would be sufficiently powerful to 'blanch an Ethiop' (line 254).

These details not only suggest something of the lavish character of the masque, but also serve as an apposite footnote to the historical commonplace that women did not act on the public stage until after the

Restoration. Whilst masques were not 'public' entertainments in the same way that plays staged at the Globe or the Blackfriars theatres were, they were nonetheless performed before large, if selected, numbers of people: the assembled court, foreign ambassadors, invited dignitaries and other observers, including servants. It is thus misleading to construe them as 'private' events; indeed, the very point of the spectacle was precisely to 'publicise' the court, to encourage the wide circulation of accounts of its learning, wealth, generosity and power. Women not only took part in these very public entertainments, but also were often, as here, the visual, narrative and ideological centre of the event. Whether, however, this phenomenon is to be read as an instance of women appropriating the field and terms of the spectacle for themselves (Queen Anne was, after all, the instigator of this masque), or whether it serves merely to testify further to the commodification and circulation of women in culture as objects of exchange and as indicators of men's status and munificence (since the whole spectacle was constructed in the service of the glorification of James's court) remains a subject for critical debate.

The masque, then, was an ostentatious and self-regarding spectacle, in which the court basked in a refraction of its own magnificence and opulence. It was a form generally intended to provoke awe and wonder in its audience but, whilst the Venetian ambassador records just such an approving response, not all spectators were so uncritical. Dudley Carleton watched *The Masque of Blackness* and his accounts of it suggest something of the anxiety such performances were able to occasion. Carleton wrote that the costumes of the Queen and the other ladies were 'rich, but too light and Curtizan-like for such great ones' (Herford and Simpson 1941 vol. x: 448). His disapproval turns on a perceived incompatibility between noble femininity and public self-exhibition; their combination, as here, conjured for him the 'cortizan', an exemplar of sexualised public female display. This association was perhaps heightened by the Queen's visible pregnancy at the time of the performance. This fact was explicitly on show, integrated into the masque's iconography as a sign of the court's fruitfulness (see lines 110 and 275).

Clearly, the meanings of the masque's opulence were not, for Carleton, gender-neutral: the extravagance of the ladies' costumes resonated uncomfortably with other kinds of feminine excess. Such hostility was, moreover, intensified by the ladies' disguises as 'blackamoors'; of these, Carleton wrote that they were 'lothsome'; he could not 'imagine a more ugly Sight, than a Troop of lean-cheek'd Moors' (Herford and Simpson 1941 vol. x: 449, 448). Here, he seems to balk at the masque's insistence that the ladies combine beauty with blackness, taking blackness instead as an unambiguous marker of ugliness. Whilst the ladies' 'beauty' might be read as precisely contingent upon, even confirmed by, their *dissatisfaction* with their blackness, and the dynamic of the plot to be towards the resolution of this paradox, there is nonetheless, for Carleton, something profoundly disturbing about a spectacle that asks him to applaud a feminine beauty racially marked by blackness.

Carleton's comments suggest why critics have become increasingly interested in *The Masque of Blackness*, and its sequel of 1608, *The Masque of Beauty*, when the ladies, now 'blanched', return. Lynda Boose summarises the interest thus: 'Jonson's two masques could together constitute a metanarrative of race and gender representation in English literature: the female blackamoors that made a symbolic foray on England's literary shores and attempted to enter early seventeenth-century representation were sent packing and welcomed back only when they had washed off their color' (Boose 1994: 53). Critics read these court entertainments as laying bare some of the faultlines along which early modern discourses of gender and 'race' are constructed. Moreover, these are exposed as an integral part of one of the key processes whereby political power itself was produced and maintained: namely, through spectacle. The early modern court was a site in which 'the power of sovereignty work[ed] primarily by making itself *visible*; it promulgat[ed] and extend[ed] itself through public progresses, entertainments and propaganda' (Halpern 1991: 3). In few places was this process as starkly visible as in the spectacle of the court masque, a display in which conspicuous consumption was so manifestly in the service of conspicuous self-production.

### Textual note

*The Masque of Blackness* was first published in Quarto in 1608, and then in the Folio *Workes* of 1616. There is one manuscript edition which is in the British Library. These are referred to in the footnotes as (respectively) Q, F and MS. This edition follows the 1616 *Workes*.

## Further reading

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Works of related interest

- Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Mariam* (1604)
- Samuel Daniel, *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* (1604)
- Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Beauty* (1608)
- Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Queens* (1609)
- Ben Jonson, *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609)
- Samuel Daniel, *Tethys' Festival* (1610)
- Ben Jonson, *The Irish Masque at Court* (1613)
- Ben Jonson, *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion* (1624)
- Ben Jonson, *The Fortunate Isles, and Their Union* (1625)
- Thomas Carew, *Coelum Britannicum* (1634)

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## The Masque of Blackness (1605)

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The honour and splendour of these spectacles was such in the performance as, could those hours have lasted, this of mine now had been a most unprofitable work. But, when it is the fate even of the greatest and most absolute births to need and borrow a life of posterity, little had been done to the study of magnificence in these if presently with the rage of the people, who, as a part of greatness, are privileged by custom to deface their carcasses, the spirits had also perished. In duty, therefore, to that majesty who gave them their authority and grace, and, no less than the most royal of predecessors, deserves eminent celebration for these solemnities, I add this later hand to redeem them as well from ignorance as envy, two common evils, the one of censure, the other of oblivion. 16

Pliny, Solinus, Ptolemy, and of late Leo the African, remember unto us a river in Ethiopia famous by the name of Niger, of which the people were called *Nigritae*, now Negroes, and are the blackest nation of the world. This river taketh spring out of a certain lake, eastward, and after a long race

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5 absolute: perfect; here, noble

7 these: i.e. these masques

8–9 rage . . . carcasses: traditionally, the audience was permitted to tear down the scenery and plunder the decorations at the end of a masque

14 them: i.e. the spirits (see l. 10)

17 Pliny *Natural History* V.viii.[43–4]; Solinus [Julius Solinus] *Polyhistor* [or *Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium* xxvii.5 and xxx.1]; Ptolemy [Ptolemy of Alexandria, *Geography*] IV.vi.[4–5]; Leo the African [Joannes Leo Africanus] *Description of Africa* [I, 'Division of Africa']. [Jonson's note]

21 river: some take it to be the same with Nilus, which is by Lucan called *Melas*, signifying *niger* [black]. Howsoever, Pliny, in the place above noted, hath this: 'The river Niger has the same nature as the Nile; it produces reeds, papyrus and the same animals.' See Solinus above-mentioned. [Jonson's note; here and throughout Jonson's own notes, passages in inverted commas or italics appeared in Latin or Greek in the original]

22 lake: Lake Chad

falleth into the western ocean. Hence, because it was her majesty's will to have them blackamores at first, the invention was derived by me, and presented thus. 26

*First, for the scene, was drawn a Landtschap, consisting of small woods, and here and there a void place filled with huntings; which falling, an artificial sea was seen to shoot forth, as if it flowed to the land, raised with waves which seemed to move, and in some places the billow to break, as imitating that orderly disorder which is common in nature. In front of this sea were placed six tritons in moving and sprightly actions, their upper parts human, save that their hairs were blue, as partaking of the sea colour, their desinent parts fish, mounted above their heads, and all varied in disposition. From their backs were borne out certain light pieces of taffeta, as if carried by the wind, and their music made out of wreathed shells. Behind these, a pair of sea-maids, for song, were as conspicuously seated; between which, two great sea-horses, as big as the life, put forth themselves, the one mounting aloft and writhing his head from the other, which seemed to sink forwards; so intended for variation, and that the figure behind might come off better; upon their backs, Oceanus and Niger were advanced. 47*

*Oceanus presented in a human form, the colour of*

---

24 them: the masquers

27 *Landtschap*: landscape, painted on a curtain. (The Dutch spelling of the word indicates its novelty)

29 *huntings*: i.e. by animals of their prey

*falling*: the landscape-curtain fell in front of the stage, rather than being drawn across it

29–32 *artificial sea* . . . *break*: a machine turned, raising and lowering coloured cloths

34 *tritons*: the form of these tritons, with their trumpets, you may read lively described in Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I.[33off.]: 'He calls the sea-coloured triton,' etc., and in Virgil, *Aeneid* X.[209ff.]: 'He sails upon the huge triton, *et seq.* [Jonson's note]. Tritons were sea-gods

36 *desinent*: lower

46 *upon their backs*: Lucian in *Rhetoron Didaskalos* [*The Professor of Public Speaking*, 6] presents Nilus so, 'sitting on a hippopotamus.' And Statius Neptune, in the *Thebaid* [II.45]. [Jonson's note]

his flesh blue, and shadowed with a robe of sea-green; his head grey and horned, as he is described by the ancients; his beard of the like mixed colour. He was garlanded with algae, or sea-grass, and in his hand a trident. 53

Niger in form and colour of an Ethiop, his hair and rare beard curled, shadowed with a blue and bright mantle; his front, neck and wrists adorned with pearl; and crowned with an artificial wreath of cane and paper-rush.

These induced the masquers, which were twelve nymphs, Negroes, and daughters of Niger, attended by so many of the Oceaniae, which were their light-bearers. 63

The masquers were placed in a great concave shell, like mother of pearl, curiously made to move on those waters, and rise with the billow; the top thereof was stuck with a chevron of lights, which, indented to the proportion of the shell, struck a glorious beam upon them as they were seated one above another; so that they were all seen, but in an extravagant order.

On sides of the shell did swim six huge sea-monsters, varied in their shape and dispositions, bearing on their backs the twelve torch-bearers, who were planted there in several greces, so as the backs of some were seen, some in purple, or side, others in face; and all having their lights burning out of whelks or murex shells. 75

The attire of the masquers was alike in all, without difference: the colours, azure and silver; their hair thick

and curled upright in tresses, like pyramids, but returned on the top with a scroll and antique dressing of feathers and jewels interlaced with ropes of pearl. And for the front, ear, neck and wrists, the ornament was of the most choice and orient pearl, best setting off from the black.

For the light-bearers, sea-green, waved about the skirts with gold and silver; their hair loose and flowing, garlanded with sea-grass, and that stuck with branches of coral. 87

These thus presented, the scene behind seemed a vast sea, and united with this that flowed forth, from the termination or horizon of which (being the level of the state, which was placed in the upper end of the hall) was drawn, by the lines of perspective, the whole work shooting downwards from the eye; which decorum made it more conspicuous, and caught the eye afar off with a wandering beauty. To which was added an obscure and cloudy night-piece, that made the whole set off. So much for the bodily part, which was of Master Inigo Jones his design and act. 98

By this, one of the tritons, with the two sea-maids, began to sing to the others' loud music, their voices being a tenor and two trebles.

## SONG

Sound, sound aloud  
The welcome of the orient flood  
Into the west;  
Fair Niger, son to great Oceanus,  
Now honoured thus,  
With all his beauteous race,  
Who, though but black in face,

49 shadowed: covered

50 horned: the Ancients induced Oceanus always with a bull's head, on account of the violence of the winds by which he is stirred up and driven, or because he is borne against the shore raging like a bull. Euripides in the *Orestes* [1376-9]: 'The land, which bull-headed Ocean rolls round and circles with his arms.' And rivers sometimes were so called. Look Virgil on the Tiber and the Eridanus, *Georgics* IV.[369-72]; *Aeneid* VIII.[77]; Horace, *Odes* IV.xiv.[25]; and Euripides in *Ion* [untraced; not in *Ion*]. [Jonson's note]

55 rare: thin

56 front: forehead

58 paper-rush: papyrus

59 induced: brought in

61 Oceaniae: the daughters of Oceanus and Tethys; see Hesiod in the *Theogeny* [346-70], Orpheus in the *Hymns* [*Homeric Hymns* ii. (*To Demeter*)5], and Virgil in the *Georgics* [IV.382]. [Jonson's note]. The Oceaniae were sea-nymphs

64 curiously: ingeniously

69 extravagant: a) unusual; b) moving about

71 dispositions: positions

73 greces: steps

74 purple: profile

77-8 their hair . . . pyramids: words not in Q or F; added from MS

88-9 scene . . . flowed forth: the effect of a single sea was produced by the backdrop and the wave machine

90-1 level of the state: height of the throne; thus the king alone had the perfect viewing position

96 night-piece: upper part of the scenery, through which the moon later descends

97 Inigo Jones: architect and stage designer (1573-1652); throughout his career as writer of court entertainments, Jonson collaborated with him

99 this: i.e. this time

101 trebles: sopranos

105 son: all rivers are said to be the sons of the Ocean for, as the ancients thought, out of the vapours exhaled by the heat of the sun, rivers and fountains were begotten. And both by Orpheus in the *Hymns* [*Orphica* LXXXIII] and Homer, *Iliad* XIV.[201, 246, 302], Oceanus is celebrated as father and source of gods and things, because nothing is born or decays without moisture. [Jonson's note]

- Yet are they bright,  
And full of life and light,  
To prove that beauty best  
Which not the colour but the feature  
Assures unto the creature.
- OCEANUS Be silent, now the ceremony's done,  
And Niger, say, how comes it, lovely son,  
That thou, the Ethiop's river, so far east,  
Art seen to fall into th'extremest west  
Of me, the king of floods, Oceanus,  
And in mine empire's heart salute me thus?  
My ceaseless current now amazèd stands,  
To see thy labour through so many lands  
Mix thy fresh billow with my brackish stream;  
And in thy sweetness stretch thy diadem  
To these far distant and unequalled skies,  
This squarèd circle of celestial bodies.
- NIGER Divine Oceanus, 'tis not strange at all  
That, since the immortal souls of creatures mortal  
Mix with their bodies, yet reserve forever  
A power of separation, I should sever  
My fresh streams from thy brackish, like things  
fixed,  
Though with thy powerful saltness thus far mixed.  
'Virtue, though chained to earth, will still live free,  
And hell itself must yield to industry.'
- OCEANUS But what's the end of thy herculean labours  
Extended to these calm and blessèd shores?
- NIGER To do a kind and careful father's part,  
In satisfying every pensive heart  
Of these my daughters, my most lovèd birth:  
Who, though they were the first formed dames of  
earth,
- 110 full of life: perhaps a reference to Queen Anne, who was  
six months pregnant at the time of the performance
- 112 feature: form
- 122 Mix: there wants not enough in nature to authorise  
this part of our fiction in separating Niger from the  
Ocean (beside the fable of Alpheus, and that to  
which Virgil alludes of Arethusa in his tenth eclogue  
[4-5]: 'When you glide beneath Sicilian waves, may  
the briny sea not mix her stream with yours'),  
examples of Nilus, Jordan and others, whereof see  
Nicanor, book I *De Fluminibus* [a lost work; see  
Herford and Simpson X.452, l. 118n.], and Plutarch in  
the *Life of Sulla* [xx.4], even of this our river (as some  
think) by the name of Melas. [Jonson's note]
- 125 squarèd . . . bodies: 'i.e. heavenly bodies perfectly  
transformed into an earthly realm' (Orgel)
- 133 hell . . . industry': reference to Horace, *Odes* I.iii.36:  
'herculean effort overcame hell'
- 139 first formed: read Diodorus Siculus, [*The Library of  
History*] III.[ii.1]. It is a conjecture of the old ethnics  
that they which dwell under the south were the first  
begotten of the earth. [Jonson's note]
- And in whose sparkling and refulgent eyes 140  
The glorious sun did still delight to rise;  
Though he (the best judge and most formal cause  
Of all dames' beauties) in their firm hues draws  
Signs of his fervent'st love, and thereby shows  
That in their black the perfect'st beauty grows,  
Since the fixed colour of their curlèd hair,  
Which is the highest grace of dames most fair,  
No cares, no age can change, or there display  
The fearful tincture of abhorred grey,  
Since Death herself (herself being pale and blue)  
Can never alter their most faithful hue; 151  
All which are arguments to prove how far  
Their beauties conquer in great beauty's war,  
And more, how near divinity they be  
That stand from passion or decay so free.  
Yet since the fabulous voices of some few  
Poor brainsick men, styled poets here with you,  
Have with such envy of their graces sung  
The painted beauties other empires sprung;  
Letting their loose and wingèd fictions fly 160  
To infect all climates, yea, our purity;  
As of one Phaëton, that fired the world,  
And that before his heedless flames were hurled  
About the globe, the Ethiops were as fair  
As other dames, now black with black despair;  
And in respect of their complexions changed,  
Are eachwhere since for luckless creatures ranged.  
Which when my daughters heard, as women are  
Most jealous of their beauties, fear and care  
Possessed them whole; yea, and believing them,  
They wept such ceaseless tears into my stream 171  
That it hath thus far overflowed his shore  
To seek them patience; who have since e'ermore  
As the sun riseth charged his burning throne  
With volleys of revilings, 'cause he shone  
On their scorched cheeks with such intemperate  
fires,  
And other dames made queens of all desires.  
To frustrate which strange error oft I sought,
- 142 formal cause: Aristotelian term, meaning 'creator of  
the form or essence'
- 145 black: usually signified ugliness at this time
- 162 Phaëton: *the famous story*; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II.[iff].  
[Jonson's note]. Phaëton was the son of Apollo, the sun  
god. He could not control the horses of the sun god,  
and drove them too close to the earth, so that Zeus  
destroyed him to prevent the world from catching fire
- 167 luckless: alluding to that of Juvenal, *Satire* v.[54], 'and  
whom you would rather not meet at midnight'.  
[Jonson's note]
- 170 them: the poets [Jonson's note]
- 174 charged: a custom of the Ethiops, notable in  
Herodotus [II.22] and Diodorus Siculus [III.ix.2]; see  
Pliny, *Natural History* V.viii.[45]. [Jonson's note]

Though most in vain, against a settled thought  
 As women's are, till they confirmed at length 180  
 By miracle what I with so much strength  
 Of argument resisted; else they feigned:  
 For in the lake where their first spring they gained,  
 As they sat cooling their soft limbs one night,  
 Appeared a face all circumfused with light  
 (And sure they saw't, for Ethiops never dream)  
 Wherein they might decipher through the stream  
 These words:  
 That they a land must forthwith seek  
 Whose termination, of the Greek, 190  
 Sounds *-tania*; where bright Sol, that heat  
 Their bloods, doth never rise or set,  
 But in his journey passeth by,  
 And leaves that climate of the sky  
 To comfort of a greater light,  
 Who forms all beauty with his sight.  
 In search of this have we three principedoms passed  
 That speak out *-tania* in their accents last;  
 Black Mauritania first, and secondly  
 Swarth Lusitania; next we did descry 200  
 Rich Aquitania, and yet cannot find  
 The place unto these longing nymphs designed.  
 Instruct and aid me, great Oceanus:  
 What land is this that now appears to us?  
 OCEANUS This land that lifts into the temperate air  
 His snowy cliff is Albion the fair,  
 So called of Neptune's son, who ruleth here;  
 For whose dear guard, myself four thousand year,  
 Since old Deucalion's days, have walked the round

186 never dream: Pliny, *ibid.* [Jonson's note]  
 191 Sol: the sun  
 192 rise or set: consult with Tacitus in the *Life of Agricola* [12], and the *Panegyric to Constantine* [anonymous; in *XII Panegyrici Latini*, ed. E. Baehrens (Leipzig, 1911), VI, 9 (p. 207)]. [Jonson's note]  
 195 greater light: i.e. King James  
 199 Mauritania: the land of the Moors, in northern Africa, now Morocco and part of Algeria  
 200 Swarth: swarthy, dark  
 Lusitania: Portugal and western Spain  
 201 Aquitania: southwestern France  
 202 designed: designated, indicated  
 206 Albion: Orpheus in his *Argonautica* calls it 'white land' [untraced; not in *Argonautica*. The reference is from Camden's *Britannia* (London, 1586), p. 20. [Jonson's note]. Albion was a traditional poetic name for England  
 207 Neptune's son: alluding to the rite of styling princes after the name of their principedoms; so is he still Albion and Neptune's son that governs. As also his being dear to Neptune in being so embraced by him [Jonson's note]. The reference is again to King James  
 209 Deucalion: survivor of a great flood; a Greek equivalent to Noah

About his empire, proud to see him crowned 210  
 Above my waves.

*At this, the moon was discovered in the upper part of the house, triumphant in a silver throne, made in figure of a pyramis. Her garments white and silver, the dressing of her head antique, and crowned with a luminary or sphere of light, which striking of the clouds, and heightened with silver, reflected as natural clouds do by the splendour of the moon. The heaven about her was vaulted with blue silk, and set with stars of silver, which had in them their several lights burning. The sudden sight of which made Niger to interrupt Oceanus, with this present passion.* 222

NIGER O see, our silver star!  
 Whose pure, auspicious light greets us thus far!  
 Great Aethiopia, goddess of our shore,  
 Since with particular worship we adore  
 Thy general brightness, let particular grace  
 Shine on my zealous daughters: show the place  
 Which long their longings urged their eyes to see.  
 Beautify them, which long have deified thee. 230  
 AETHIOPIA Niger, be glad; resume thy native cheer.  
 Thy daughters' labours have their period here,  
 And so thy errors. I was that bright face  
 Reflected by the lake, in which thy race  
 Read mystic lines; which skill Pythagoras  
 First taught to men by a reverberate glass.  
 This blessed isle doth with that *-tania* end,  
 Which there they saw inscribed, and shall extend  
 Wished satisfaction to their best desires.  
 Britannia, which the triple world admires, 240  
 This isle hath now recovered for her name,  
 Where reign those beauties that with so much fame  
 The sacred muses' sons have honoured,

214 pyramis: pyramid  
 222 present: immediate  
 225 Aethiopia: the Ethiopians worshipped the moon by that surname; see Stephanus [of Byzantium], *De Urbibus*, under the word *Aithiopian*, and his reasons. [Jonson's note]  
 232 period: end  
 235 Pythagoras . . . glass: Pythagoras was supposed to be able to reflect messages on to the moon by writing in blood on a mirror  
 reverberate: reflecting  
 240 triple world: heaven, earth and the underworld. Together these admire James's 'triple world': his three kingdoms of Scotland, England and Wales. Compare the reference to the 'triple earth' in *The Tragedy of Mariam*, III.ii.175  
 241 recovered for her name: James tried to introduce the name 'Great Britain' when he became king of England and Wales as well as of Scotland in 1604. Despite the claim made in l. 250, the name was not popular

And from bright Hesperus to Eos spread.  
 With that great name Britannia, this blest isle  
 Hath won her ancient dignity and style,  
*A world divided from the world*, and tried  
 The abstract of it in his general pride.  
 For were the world with all his wealth a ring,  
 Britannia, whose new name makes all tongues sing,  
 Might be a diamond worthy to enchase it, **251**  
 Ruled by a sun that to this height doth grace it,  
 Whose beams shine day and night, and are of force  
 To blanch an Ethiop, and revive a corse.  
 His light sciential is, and, past mere nature,  
 Can salve the rude defects of every creature.  
 Call forth thy honoured daughters, then,  
 And let them, 'fore the Britain men,  
 Indent the land with those pure traces **260**  
 They flow with in their native graces.  
 Invite them boldly to the shore;  
 Their beauties shall be scorched no more;  
 This sun is temperate, and refines  
 All things on which his radiance shines.

*Here the tritons sounded, and they danced on shore, every couple as they advanced severally presenting their fans, in one of which were inscribed their mixed names, in the other a mute hieroglyphic expressing their mixed qualities. Which manner of symbol I rather chose than impresse, as well for strangeness as relishing of antiquity, and more applying to that original doctrine of sculpture which the Egyptians are said first to have brought from the Ethiopians.* **273**

- 244 Hesperus to Eos: evening, the west, and dawn, the east, respectively  
 246 style: characterisation  
 247 *A world . . . world*: referring to the popular notion that Britain was a separate and especially fortunate world  
 247–8 tried . . . pride: 'experienced the ideal of it through England's own pride in herself' (Orgel)  
 251 enchase: set in  
 254 blanch . . . corse: proverbial impossibilities; 'corse': corpse  
 255 sciential: which has the power of science  
 259 Indent: leave footprints on traces: footsteps  
 266–7 *every couple . . . fans*: 'the ladies advanced in pairs, displaying fans to the audience, on one of which was the pair of names, on the other a picture which represented their allegorical nature. The names are largely Jonson's coinage; the emblems are drawn from Renaissance sources such as Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica*. The names of the Oceaniae come from Hesiod's *Theogeny*' (Lindley)  
 270 impresse: emblems  
 273 *from the Ethiopians*: Diodorus Siculus, [*The Library of History* III.iii.4]; Herodotus [*History* II.110]. [Jonson's note]

	<i>The names</i>	<i>The symbols</i>	
<i>The Queen</i>	1 {	EUPHORIS	A golden tree laden with fruit
<i>Countess of Bedford</i>		AGLAIA	
<i>Lady Herbert</i>	2 {	DIAPHANE	The figure
<i>Countess of Derby</i>		EUCAMPSE	<i>icosahedron</i> of crystal
<i>Lady Rich</i>	3 {	OCYTE	A pair of naked feet in a river
<i>Countess of Suffolk</i>		KATHARE	
<i>Lady Bevill</i>	4 {	NOTIS	The salamander
<i>Lady Effingham</i>		PSYCHROTE	simple
<i>Lady Elizabeth Howard</i>	5 {	GLYCYTE	A cloud full of rain, dropping
<i>Lady Susan de Vere</i>		MALACIA	
<i>Lady Wroth</i>	6 {	BARYTE	An urn, sphered with wine
<i>Lady Walsingham</i>		PERIPHERE	

The names of the Oceaniae were **293**

DORIS	CYDIPPE	BEROE	IANTHE
PETRAEA	GLAUCE	ACASTE	LYCORIS
OCYRHOE	TYCHE	CLYTIA	PLEXAURE

*Their own single dance ended, as they were about to make choice of their men, one from the sea was heard to call 'em with this charm, sung by a tenor voice.*

SONG

Come away, come away, **300**  
 We grow jealous of your stay;  
 If you do not stop your ear,  
 We shall have more cause to fear

- 274 *The names*: the meanings of these are: *Euphoris*: abundance; *Aglaia*: splendour; *Diaphane*: transparent; *Eucampse*: flexibility; *Ocyte*: swiftness; *Kathare*: spotless; *Notis*: moisture; *Psychrote*: coldness; *Glycyte*: sweetness; *Malacia*: delicacy; *Baryte*: weight; *Periphere*: revolving, circular  
*The symbols*: the significance of these is as follows: *golden tree*: fertility; *icosahedron*: twenty-sided figure, symbolising water; *naked feet in a river*: purity; *salamander*: a reptile which cannot be harmed by fire, and can extinguish it; *cloud . . . dropping*: education; *urn . . . wine*: the earth  
 293 Oceaniae: Hesiod in the *Theogeny* [346ff]. [Jonson's note]; see l. 61n above



Sirens of the land, than they  
To doubt the sirens of the sea.

*Here they danced with their men several measures and corantos. All which ended, they were again accited to sea with a song of two trebles, whose cadences were iterated by a double echo from several parts of the land.*

SONG

Daughters of the subtle flood, 310  
Do not let earth longer entertain you;  
1ST ECHO Let earth longer entertain you.  
2ND ECHO Longer entertain you.

'Tis to them enough of good  
That you give this little hope to gain you.  
1ST ECHO Give this little hope to gain you.  
2ND ECHO Little hope to gain you.

If they love,  
You shall quickly see;  
For when to flight you move, 320  
They'll follow you, the more you flee.  
1ST ECHO Follow you, the more you flee.  
2ND ECHO The more you flee.

If not, impute it each to other's matter;  
They are but earth—  
1ST ECHO But earth,  
2ND ECHO Earth—  
And what you vowed was water.  
1ST ECHO You vowed was water.

AETHIOPIA Enough, bright nymphs, the night 330  
grows old,  
And we are grieved we cannot hold  
You longer light; but comfort take.  
Your father only to the lake  
Shall make return; yourselves, with feasts,  
Must here remain the Ocean's guests.

Nor shall this veil the sun hath cast  
Above your blood more summers last;  
For which, you shall observe these rites:  
Thirteen times thrice, on thirteen nights 340  
(So often as I fill my sphere  
With glorious light throughout the year),  
You shall, when all things else do sleep  
Save your chaste thoughts, with reverence steep  
Your bodies in that purer brine  
And wholesome dew called rosmarine;  
Then with that soft and gentler foam,  
Of which the ocean yet yields some,  
Whereof bright Venus, beauty's queen,  
Is said to have begotten been,  
You shall your gentler limbs o'er-lave, 350  
And for your pains perfection have;  
So that, this night, the year gone round,  
You do again salute the ground,  
And in the beams of yond' bright sun  
Your faces dry, and all is done.

*At which, in a dance they returned to the sea, where they took their shell; and with this full song went out.*

SONG

Now Dian with her burning face  
Declines apace, 360  
By which our waters know  
To ebb, that late did flow.  
Back seas, back nymphs, but with a forward grace  
Keep, still, your reverence to the place;  
And shout with joy of favour you have won  
In sight of Albion, Neptune's son.

*So ended the first masque, which, beside the singular grace of the music and dances, had that success in the nobility of performance as nothing needs to the illustration but the memory by whom it was personated.*

306-7 *measures and corantos*: slow, stately dances and dances with a running or gliding step  
307 *accited*: summoned

345 rosmarine: sea dew  
352 year gone round: the sequel to this masque, *The Masque of Beauty* (in which, as promised, the ladies reappear having been 'blanched' by the sun-king's beams) was, however, not produced until three years later, in 1608  
358 Dian: Diana, goddess of the moon

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## Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

First performed 1607–8

First published 1613

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*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was written for the private Blackfriars Theatre, built by Richard Burbage in 1596, and was performed by a company of boy actors. The play is significant for the information it offers in the Induction and elsewhere about contemporary acting companies and the public taste in theatre, as well as other popular cultural forms, such as the chivalric romance. This, together with its representation of social class, and its very specific sense of the geography of London and its environs, gives *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* a particular authority for students of early seventeenth-century theatre. Beaumont's play is a network of overlapping dramatic narratives. The Induction and the Interludes supply a commentary on (and intervene in) the two 'inner' narratives, that of Venturewell and his family (the story of 'The London Merchant') and the enactment of 'The Knight of the Burning Pestle' itself. That the one story parodies London's aspiring merchant class, and the other satirises that class's taste for chivalric romance, gives the play a special sense of topicality. The Citizen's 'Down with your title, boy, down with your title!' (Induction, 29), in response to what he predicts will be yet another Blackfriars play poking fun at his class, is humorous but also emphatic; it is a cry from the heart of a class that was sensitive about its own emerging, but as yet ill-defined, position at the centre of London's economic and social transformation.

The sensitivity to social rank and identity is confirmed as it is exposed in Venturewell's attempts at manipulation in the business of his daughter Luce's marriage: he is entirely willing to enhance his social position at the expense of his daughter's genuine desire for the 'unsuitable' Jasper. In turn, Jasper, similarly dismissed by his own mother, can rely on neither professional bonds (his indentures as an apprentice) or family loyalty. As for his love for Luce, and her love for him, these become tellingly confused by the play's continual recourse to the enactment of chivalric codes, such as in the scene in Waltham Forest in Act III where Jasper 'tests' Luce. Humorous and bizarre as they are, such episodes suggest that in this dramatic world, as much as in any tragedy, the 'experience' of the social is dictated by 'codes' of representation that are shaped by value judgements which confine rather than liberate.

The enactment of 'The Knight of the Burning Pestle' superficially suggests an innocent preoccupation by the citizens with the old stories of chivalric adventure and nobility. They celebrate, and Beaumont parodies, the tales of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton, meshing these with narratives derived from popular Spanish prose romances. However, such evocations of the past also had a clear place in the official and semi-official discourse of the Tudor and early Stuart state. Edmund Spenser (1552–99) had written his chivalric romance, *The Faerie Queene* (1590–6), with a seriousness that borders on the melancholic, framing a mythologised national history that underpinned Elizabethan Protestant identity. *The Faerie Queene* is referred to in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (II.180), but the contrast between Spenser's stately epic and Beaumont's parody is complete, undermining a project that, in more widely accessible forms than Spenser's, was represented in ballads, pageants and other popular forms of entertainments.

Some of these entertainments were presented at Mile End and it is not surprising that, towards the end of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, the action shifts to this location. Here, beyond the city walls of London, was where the serious business of training soldiers had traditionally taken place, an activity that the play parodies in a subversive way. Yet it was also the scene of the kind of 'misrule' and carnival espoused by Rafe and Merrythought, but severely condemned by the Puritans who were emerging as the more powerful and politically motivated representatives of the social class from which Beaumont drew his characters.

*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is a compelling and often hilarious account of the workings of early seventeenth-century theatre, a parody of contemporary concerns over an evolving system of social class, and a critique of an earlier genre of plays that celebrated an ideal of 'Merry England', such as Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599). Yet many critics agree that the framing device of the Induction and Interludes tempts us to share the considerable and, finally, unattractive, prejudices of the Citizen and his Wife. Indeed, the play may put us in the position of endorsing easy solutions to the problematic social distinctions that shape the world of the play, favouring a sense of order above the chaos that is achieved through the intersection

of social class with chivalric romance and festive release. Merrythought, with his constant recourse to song in the face of adversity, makes us laugh until, perhaps, we consider the terms, and price, of his good humour. As Arthur Kinney has remarked, 'Merrythought, after all, is forever genial, yet that very geniality depends on the willingness of others to support him – he survives on the legacy of others. He can also carry his one-dimensional philosophy to an excess we would consider inhuman: "If both my sons were on the gallows, I would sing"' (Kinney 1999: 389). As with much of the comedy of the period, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* suggests that, beyond the laughter, there was a very real uncertainty in the shift from a late-medieval world into a recognisably modern one.

### Textual note

*The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was once thought to have been written jointly by Francis Beaumont and his long-term collaborator, John Fletcher (1579–1625), but we follow recent editors, and the evidence of careful analysis of the play's stylistic cohesion, in attributing it to Beaumont alone. This edition is based on the quarto of 1613 (referred to in the footnotes as Q<sub>1</sub>) and the two further quartos dated 1635 (Q<sub>2</sub> and Q<sub>3</sub>). The play was reprinted from Q<sub>3</sub> (which may, in fact, have been later than 1635) for the second Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1679. Copies of these early editions are held in the British Library in London. This edition reproduces the seventeenth-century division of the play into Acts and Interludes; further subdivision (into scenes), although favoured by some modern editors, suggests an undermining of the unusual sense of pace and cohesion achieved by the continued presence on the stage of the Citizen and the Citizen's Wife.

## Further reading

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 George Peele, *The Old Wives' Tale* (1591)  
 George Peele, *Edward I* (1591)  
 Thomas Heywood, *The Four Prentices of London* (1594)  
 Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599)  
 Thomas Dekker, *Old Fortunatus* (1599)  
 George Chapman, Ben Jonson and John Marston, *Eastward Ho!* (1605)  
 Thomas Heywood, *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody* (1605)  
 John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins, *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607)

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## *The Knight of the Burning Pestle (1607)*

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### To His Many Ways Endear'd Friend Master Robert Keysar

Sir, this unfortunate child who in eight days (as lately I have learned) was begot and born, soon after was by his parents (perhaps because he was so unlike his brethren) exposed to the wide world, who for want of judgement, or not understanding the privy mark of irony about it (which showed it was no offspring of any vulgar brain) utterly rejected it; so that for want of acceptance it was even ready to give up the ghost, and was in danger to have been smothered in perpetual oblivion, if you (out of your direct antipathy to ingratitude) had not been moved both to relieve and cherish it. Wherein I must needs commend both your judgement, understanding, and singular love to good wits. You afterwards sent it to me, yet being an infant and somewhat ragged; I have fostered it privately in my bosom these two years, and now to show my love return it to you, clad in good lasting clothes, which scarce memory will wear out, and able to speak for itself; and, withal, as it telleth me, desirous to try his fortune in the world, where if yet it be welcome, father, foster-father, nurse, and child, all have their desired end. If it be slighted or traduced, it hopes his father will beget him a younger brother who shall revenge his quarrel, and challenge the world either of fond and merely literal interpretation, or illiterate misprision. Perhaps it will be thought to be of the race

---

Robert Keysar: London goldsmith who, from about 1606, had financed The Children of the Revels at the Blackfriars Theatre

- 1 eight days: the period of composition (taken literally by many scholars)  
2-3 his parents: one piece of evidence for the idea of joint authorship, i.e. with John Fletcher  
3 brethren: other plays  
6 no offspring . . . vulgar brain: not an ordinary citizen comedy  
7 utterly rejected: either it was not performed or it was not appreciated  
14 ragged: the author's foul papers (manuscript)  
20 father, foster-father, nurse, and child: i.e. author, dedicatee, publisher, and play

of *Don Quixote*: we both may confidently swear it is his elder above a year; and therefore may (by virtue of his birthright) challenge the wall of him. I doubt not but they will meet in their adventures, and I hope the breaking of one staff will make them friends; and perhaps they will combine themselves, and travel through the world to seek their adventures. So I commit him to his good fortune, and myself to your love.

Your assured friend

34

W.B.

### To the Readers of this Comedy

Gentlemen, the world is so nice in these our times, that for apparel, there is no fashion; for music, which is a rare art (though now slighted), no instrument; for diet, none but the French kickshaws that are delicate; and for plays, no invention but that which now runneth an invective way, touching some particular person, or else it is contemned before it is thoroughly understood. This is all that I have to say, that the author had no intent to wrong anyone in this comedy, but as a merry passage, here and there interlaced it with delight, which he hopes will please all, and be hurtful to none.

12

- 
- 26 *Don Quixote*: the first part of Cervantes' novel was printed in Spain in 1605 and an English translation (by Shelton) appeared in 1612, but both the original and the translation are known to have circulated in some form before this  
28 challenge the wall: claim the safer part of a footpath (close to the wall) and thus take precedence  
30 breaking of one staff: an incident from Cervantes  
36 W.B.: Walter Burre, the publisher  
1 nice: fastidious  
4 kickshaws: from *quelque chose* (French), dainties  
7 thoroughly: thoroughly

## The Prologue

Where the bee can suck no honey, she leaves her sting behind; and where the bear cannot find organum to heal his grief, he blasteth all other leaves with his breath. We fear it is like to fare so with us, that seeing you cannot draw from our labours sweet content, you leave behind you a sour mislike and with open reproach blame our good meaning because you cannot reap the wonted mirth. Our intent was at this time to move inward delight, not outward lightness; and to breed (if it might be) soft smiling, not loud laughing, knowing it to the wise to be as great pleasure to hear counsel mixed with wit, as to the foolish to have sport mingled with rudeness. They were banished the theatre of Athens, and from Rome hissed, that brought parasites on the stage with apish actions, or fools with uncivil habits, or courtézans with immodest words. We have endeavoured to be as far from unseemly speeches to make your ears glow, as we hope you will be free from unkind reports, or, mistaking the author's intention (who never aimed at any one particular in this play), to make our cheeks blush. And thus I leave it and thee to thine own censure, to like, or dislike. *Vale*. 22

## The Speakers' Names

### THE PROLOGUE

*Then a* CITIZEN, GEORGE

*The* CITIZEN'S WIFE, NELL, *and*

RAFE, *her man, sitting below amidst the spectators*

VENTUREWELL, *a rich* MERCHANT

JASPER, *his apprentice*

MASTER HUMPHREY, *a friend to the merchant*

LUCE, *the merchant's daughter*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, *Jasper's mother*

MICHAEL, *a second son of Mistress Merrythought*

OLD MASTER MERRYTHOUGHT

TIM, *a* SQUIRE

GEORGE, *a* DWARF

A TAPSTER

} *Apprentices*

The Prologue: from Q<sub>2</sub>, reprinted *Sapho and Phao* (1584) by John Lyly (c. 1554–1606)

<sup>2</sup> organum: a herb of the marjoram family

<sup>14</sup> parasites: low-born (sometimes grotesque) attendants upon the rich

<sup>22</sup> *Vale*: farewell

The Speakers' Names: from Q<sub>2</sub>

A BOY *that danceth and singeth*

AN HOST

A BARBER

*Three* KNIGHTS *supposed captives*

A WOMAN, *supposed captive*

A SERGEANT

SOLDIERS

WILLIAM HAMERTON, *a pewterer*

GEORGE GREENGOOSE, *a poulterer*

POMPIONA, *a daughter to the King of Moldavia*

*Boys, Gentlemen, Attendants, Servants*

## Induction

GENTLEMEN *seated upon the stage*. *The* CITIZEN, *his* WIFE, *and* RAFE *below among the audience*

*Enter* PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE From all that's near the court, from all that's great  
Within the compass of the city-walls,  
We now have brought our scene—

*Enter* CITIZEN *on to the stage from the audience below*

CITIZEN Hold your peace, goodman boy.

PROLOGUE What do you mean, sir?

CITIZEN That you have no good meaning. This seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play *The London Merchant*. Down with your title, boy, down with your title! 10

PROLOGUE Are you a member of the noble city?

CITIZEN I am.

*Three* KNIGHTS: eds (Two KNIGHTS Q<sub>2</sub>)

SD GENTLEMEN: tobacco-smoking gallants who paid for seats on the stage

<sup>1</sup> court: at Westminster

<sup>2</sup> city-walls: the walls that enclosed London north of the Thames

<sup>4</sup> Hold your peace, goodman boy: parody of John Day's *Isle of Gulls* (1606) in which the Prologue is interrupted by playgoers telling him what they want to see

<sup>6–7</sup> This seven . . . this house: The Children of the Revels played at Blackfriars from 1600 to 1608

<sup>8</sup> still: always

girds: sneers

<sup>9</sup> *The London Merchant*: probably the play about Venturewell and his family

<sup>10</sup> title: a placard bearing the title of the play

<sup>11</sup> member: citizen

PROLOGUE And a freeman?  
 CITIZEN Yea, and a grocer.  
 PROLOGUE So, grocer, then by your sweet favour, we intend no abuse to the city.  
 CITIZEN No, sir? Yes, sir! If you were not resolved to play the jacks, what need you study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters? Why could not you be contented, as well as others, with *The Legend of Whittington*, or *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham, with the Building of the Royal Exchange*, or *The Story of Queen Elenor, with the Rearing of London Bridge upon Wool-sacks*? 24  
 PROLOGUE You seem to be an understanding man. What would you have us do, sir?  
 CITIZEN Why, present something notably in honour of the commons of the city.  
 PROLOGUE Why, what do you say to *The Life and Death of Fat Drake*, or *The Repairing of Fleet-privies*? 30  
 CITIZEN I do not like that; but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.  
 PROLOGUE Oh, you should have told us your mind a month since. Our play is ready to begin now.  
 CITIZEN 'Tis all one for that; I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.  
 PROLOGUE What will you have him do?  
 CITIZEN Marry, I will have him—

WIFE below

WIFE Husband, husband.

RAFE below

- 
- 13 freeman: one enjoying the privileges of the City following a successful apprenticeship  
 14 grocer: one of London's twelve great livery companies (which also included the Mercers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Taylors, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners and Clothworkers)  
 15 favour: play on 'face'  
 18 play the jacks: play tricks (i.e. 'play the knave')  
 19 betters: adult companies  
 20-4 all plays that glorified London. Dick Whittington was the legendary Lord Mayor who rose to his position from low estate; a play about him was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1605. Thomas Gresham appears in *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody*, (1605) by Thomas Heywood; he built the Royal Exchange, a place of resort opened by Elizabeth I. Queen Eleanor appears in *Edward I* (1591) by George Peele; 'The Building of London Bridge upon Woolsacks' was a contemporary dance inspired by the raising of taxes on wool to finance the bridge  
 25 understanding: a joke referring to the fact that the spectators were below the stage  
 28 commons: the body of freemen  
 29-30 *The Life . . . Fleet-privies*: probably an invention (Fleet Ditch was used as a sewer)  
 36 admirable: wonderful

RAFE Peace, mistress. 40  
 WIFE Hold thy peace, Rafe; I know what I do, I warrant'ee.—Husband, husband.  
 CITIZEN What say'st thou, cony?  
 WIFE Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband; let him kill a lion with a pestle.  
 CITIZEN So he shall.—I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.  
 WIFE Husband, shall I come up, husband?  
 CITIZEN Ay, cony.—Rafe, help your mistress this way.—Pray, gentlemen, make her a little room.—I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife; I thank you, sir.—So. 52

WIFE comes up on to the stage

WIFE By your leave, gentlemen all, I'm something troublesome; I'm a stranger here; I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before; but I should have seen *Jane Shore* once, and my husband hath promised me any time this twelvemonth to carry me to *The Bold Beauchamps*; but in truth he did not. I pray you bear with me.  
 CITIZEN Boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools, and then begin, and let the grocer do rare things. 61  
 PROLOGUE But sir, we have never a boy to play him; everyone hath a part already.  
 WIFE Husband, husband, for God's sake let Rafe play him; beshrew me if I do not think he will go beyond them all.  
 CITIZEN Well remembered, wife.—Come up, Rafe.—I'll tell you, gentlemen, let them but lend him a suit of reparael and necessaries, and, by gad, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged. 70

RAFE comes up on to the stage

WIFE I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparael.—I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true: he will act you sometimes at our house, that all the neighbours cry out on him. He will fetch you up a couraging part so in the garret, that we are all as feared, I warrant you, that we quake again. We'll fear

---

43 cony: rabbit (and term of endearment)

44 kill a . . . a pestle: the kind of romance satirised in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* often included battles with wild animals. An apprentice in Thomas Heywood's *The Four Prentices of London* (c. 1594) claims he killed a lion

48 shall I come up?: women rarely sat on the stage

65 *Jane Shore*: mistress of Edward IV who appears in Heywood's *Edward IV* (1599)

57-8 *The Bold Beauchamps*: a lost play attributed to Heywood

65 beshrew me: 'the devil take me'

69 reparael: apparel (archaic)

70 blow wind in the tail: come near (from horse-racing)

74 cry out: complain of

75 couraging: spirited

our children with him: if they be never so unruly, do but cry, 'Rafe comes, Rafe comes', to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs.—Hold up thy head, Rafe; show the gentlemen what thou canst do; speak a huffing part; I warrant you the gentlemen will accept of it. **82**

CITIZEN Do, Rafe, do.

RAFE By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap  
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,  
Or dive into the bottom of the sea  
Where never fathom-line touched any ground  
And pluck up drowned honour from the lake of hell.

CITIZEN How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you? **90**

WIFE Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, Mucedorus before the wardens of our company.

CITIZEN Ay, and he should have played Jeronimo with a shoemaker for a wager.

PROLOGUE He shall have a suit of apparel if he will go in.

CITIZEN In, Rafe; in, Rafe; and set out the grocery in their kind, if thou lov'st me. *Exit* RAFE

WIFE I warrant our Rafe will look finely when he's dressed. **100**

PROLOGUE But what will you have it called?

CITIZEN *The Grocers' Honour*.

PROLOGUE Methinks *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* were better.

WIFE I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

CITIZEN Let it be so. Begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

PROLOGUE I pray you, do.

CITIZEN What stately music have you? You have shawms? **III**

81 huffing: bombastic

84-8 By heaven . . . of hell: a version of Hotspur's speech in *Henry IV*, I.iii.199-3; Shakespeare's fourth line reads: 'And pluck up drownèd honour by the locks' (Rafe substitutes a contemporary commonplace)

92 Mucedorus: reference to a popular anonymous play of the late sixteenth century that mixed high romance with buffoonery

before the wardens: livery companies played at the Guildhall and at court; the companies were directed by wardens

94 Jeronimo: i.e. Hieronimo, the protagonist of *The Spanish Tragedy*

96 go in: to the tiring-house (behind the stage) where costumes were kept

97-8 in their kind: each company had its distinctive livery

103 *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*: a pestle would be used by grocers as a tool in the preparation of their wares, but it also had a phallic connotation. 'Burning' means 'gilded' but also refers to the effects of syphilis

III shawms: early oboes

PROLOGUE Shawms? No.

CITIZEN No? I'm a thief if my mind did not give me so.

Rafe plays a stately part, and he must needs have shawms; I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without them.

PROLOGUE So you are like to be.

CITIZEN Why, and so I will be. There's two shillings; let's have the waits of Southwark. They are as rare fellows as any are in England; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad. **122**

PROLOGUE You shall have them. Will you sit down then?

CITIZEN Ay. Come, wife.

WIFE Sit you merry all, gentlemen. I'm bold to sit amongst you for my ease.

PROLOGUE From all that's near the court, from all that's great

Within the compass of the city-walls,  
We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence  
All private taxes, immodest phrases, **130**

Whate'er may but show like vicious:

For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,  
But honest minds are pleased with honest things.

—Thus much for that we do; but for Rafe's part you must answer for yourself. *Exit*

CITIZEN Take you no care for Rafe; he'll discharge himself, I warrant you.

WIFE I' faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Rafe.

## Act I

*Enter* MERCHANT VENTUREWELL and JASPER, *his prentice*

MERCHANT Sirrah, I'll make you know you are my prentice,

And whom my charitable love redeemed  
Even from the fall of fortune; gave thee heat  
And growth to be what now thou art, new cast thee;  
Adding the trust of all I have at home,  
In foreign staples, or upon the sea,  
To thy direction; tied the good opinions  
Both of myself and friends to thy endeavours:  
So fair were thy beginnings. But with these,

119 waits: musicians employed by the City

121 o'er the water: over the Thames (from Southwark)

130 private taxes: attacks on individuals  
immodest phrases: obscenities

136 discharge: a) acquit; b) ejaculate  
1 Sirrah: common form of address (to an inferior)

3 fall of fortune: poverty

3-4 heat/And growth: room and board

4 new cast: reformed

5 trust: use

6 staples: a) storehouses; b) centres of trade

9 fair: promising

As I remember, you had never charge  
 To love your master's daughter, and even then  
 When I had found a wealthy husband for her.  
 I take it, sir, you had not; but, however,  
 I'll break the neck of that commission  
 And make you know you are but a merchant's factor.

JASPER Sir, I do liberally confess I am yours,  
 Bound both by love and duty to your service,  
 In which my labour hath been all my profit.  
 I have not lost in bargain, nor delighted  
 To wear your honest gains upon my back,  
 Nor have I given a pension to my blood,  
 Or lavishly in play consumed your stock.  
 These, and the miseries that do attend them,  
 I dare with innocence proclaim are strangers  
 To all my temperate actions. For your daughter,  
 If there be any love to my deservings  
 Borne by her virtuous self, I cannot stop it;  
 Nor am I able to refrain her wishes.  
 She's private to herself and best of knowledge  
 Whom she'll make so happy as to sigh for.  
 Besides, I cannot think you mean to match her  
 Unto a fellow of so lame a presence,  
 One that hath little left of nature in him.

MERCHANT 'Tis very well, sir. I can tell your wisdom  
 How all this shall be cured.

JASPER Your care becomes you.

MERCHANT And thus it must be, sir: I here discharge you  
 My house and service. Take your liberty,  
 And when I want a son I'll send for you. *Exit*

JASPER These be the fair rewards of them that love.  
 Oh you that live in freedom, never prove  
 The travail of a mind led by desire! 40

*Enter* LUCE

LUCE Why, how now, friend? Struck with my father's  
 thunder?

JASPER Struck, and struck dead, unless the remedy  
 Be full of speed and virtue. I am now

13 you had not: i.e. given up your love for someone superior  
 (in social rank)  
 however: notwithstanding  
 14 commission: a) act of courtship; b) professional remit  
 15 factor: agent, deputy  
 16 liberally: willingly  
 21 pension: market value  
 22 play: gambling  
 28 refrain: curb  
 29 private to . . . of knowledge: free to decide and knows  
 best of all  
 32 presence: personality  
 33 little left of nature: 'little life-force'  
 38 son: i.e. son-in-law  
 40 prove: experience  
 44 speed and virtue: determination and goodness

10 What I expected long, no more your father's.  
 LUCE But mine.

JASPER But yours, and only yours, I am;  
 That's all I have to keep me from the statute.  
 You dare be constant still?

LUCE Oh, fear me not.  
 In this I dare be better than a woman:  
 Nor shall his anger nor his offers move me, 50  
 Were they both equal to a prince's power.

JASPER You know my rival?

LUCE Yes, and love him dearly,  
 Even as I love an ague or foul weather;  
 I prithee, Jasper, fear him not.

JASPER Oh, no,  
 I do not mean to do him so much kindness.  
 But to our own desires: you know the plot  
 We both agreed on?

LUCE Yes, and will perform  
 My part exactly.

JASPER I desire no more.  
 Farewell, and keep my heart; 'tis yours. 30

LUCE I take it; 59  
 He must do miracles makes me forsake it. *Exeunt*

CITIZEN Fie upon 'em, little infidels: what a matter's  
 here now! Well, I'll be hanged for a halfpenny, if  
 there be not some abomination knavery in this play.  
 Well, let 'em look to't. Rafe must come, and if there  
 be any tricks a-brewing—

WIFE Let 'em brew and bake too, husband, a God's  
 name. Rafe will find all out, I warrant you, and they  
 were older than they are.—

*Enter* BOY

I pray, my pretty youth, is Rafe ready?  
 BOY He will be presently. 70

WIFE Now, I pray you, make my commendations unto  
 him, and withal carry him this stick of liquorice. Tell  
 him his mistress sent it him, and bid him bite a piece;  
 'twill open his pipes the better, say. *Exit* BOY

*Enter* MERCHANT and MASTER HUMPHREY

47 the statute: a) that against rogues, vagabonds and  
 masterless men; b) that of 1562 which meant that  
 apprentices could not leave their masters' parishes. Both  
 statutes were enforced by provision for imprisonment  
 49 better than a woman: women were thought to be  
 irredeemably 'inconstant'  
 53 ague: fever (often the result of damp weather)  
 54 I prithee: 'I pray you'  
 61 infidels: 'George's natural and class loyalty is to the  
 merchant' (Kinney)  
 67 and: if  
 69 pretty: clever  
 72-4 stick of . . . better, say: liquorice was used to loosen  
 phlegm and clear the throat; the Wife has a supply of  
 such remedies which are mocked throughout the play



MERCHANT Come, sir, she's yours; upon my faith, she's yours;  
 You have my hand. For other idle lets  
 Between your hopes and her, thus with a wind  
 They are scattered and no more. My wanton prentice,  
 That like a bladder blew himself with love,  
 I have let out, and sent him to discover **80**  
 New masters yet unknown.

HUMPHREY I thank you, sir,  
 Indeed, I thank you, sir; and ere I stir  
 It shall be known, however you do deem,  
 I am of gentle blood and gentle seem.

MERCHANT Oh, sir, I know it certain.

HUMPHREY Sir, my friend,  
 Although, as writers say, all things have end,  
 And that we call a pudding hath his two,  
 Oh, let it not seem strange, I pray, to you,  
 If in this bloody simile I put  
 My love, more endless than frail things or gut. **90**

WIFE Husband, I prithee, sweet lamb, tell me one  
 thing, but tell me truly:—Stay youths, I beseech you,  
 till I question my husband.

CITIZEN What is it, mouse?

WIFE Sirrah, didst thou ever see a prettier child? How  
 it behaves itself, I warrant ye, and speaks, and looks,  
 and perts up the head?—I pray you, brother, with  
 your favour, were you never none of Master  
 Monkester's scholars? **99**

CITIZEN Chicken, I prithee heartily, contain thyself;  
 the childer are pretty childer; but when Rafe comes,  
 lamb—

WIFE Ay, when Rafe comes, cony.—Well, my youth,  
 you may proceed.

MERCHANT Well, sir, you know my love, and rest, I  
 hope,  
 Assured of my consent. Get but my daughter's,  
 And wed her when you please. You must be bold,  
 And clap in close unto her. Come, I know  
 You have language good enough to win a wench.

76 lets: obstacles

78 wanton: promiscuous,

79 bladder: inflatable animal's bladder (with obscene  
 connotation)

84 gentle blood: some status

87 pudding: blood sausage

92 youths: the boy actors

94 mouse: term of endearment (as is 'chicken' and others)

95 prettier: more clever

97 perts: perks

98–9 Master Monkester: Richard Mulcaster was Master of  
 St Paul's School from 1596 to 1608 and its boys' troupe  
 played at the Whitefriar's Theatre

101 childer: children (dialect)

108 clap in close unto her: embrace

109 wench: a) young girl; b) prostitute

WIFE A whoreson tyrant! H'as been an old stringer in's  
 days, I warrant him. **111**

HUMPHREY I take your gentle offer, and withal  
 Yield love again for love reciprocal.

MERCHANT What, Luce! Within there!

Enter LUCE

LUCE Called you, sir?

MERCHANT I did.

Give entertainment to this gentleman  
 And see you be not froward.—To her, sir;

My presence will but be an eye-sore to you. *Exit*

HUMPHREY Fair Mistress Luce, how do you do? Are  
 you well?

Give me your hand, and then I pray you tell  
 How doth your little sister and your brother, **120**  
 And whether you love me or any other.

LUCE Sir, these are quickly answered.

HUMPHREY So they are,

Where women are not cruel. But how far

Is it now distant from this place we are in,

Unto that blessed place, your father's warren?

LUCE What makes you think of that, sir?

HUMPHREY Even that face;

For, stealing rabbits whilom in that place,

God Cupid, or the keeper, I know not whether,

Unto my cost and charges brought you thither,

And there began—

LUCE Your game, sir.

HUMPHREY Let no game **130**

Or any thing that tendeth to the same,

Be evermore remembered, thou fair killer,

For whom I sat me down and brake my tiller.

WIFE There's a kind gentleman, I warrant you. When

will you do as much for me, George?

LUCE Beshrew me, sir, I am sorry for your losses;

But as the proverb says, I cannot cry.

I would you had not seen me.

HUMPHREY So would I,

Unless you had more maw to do me good.

LUCE Why, cannot this strange passion be withstood?

Send for a constable and raise the town. **141**

HUMPHREY Oh no, my valiant love will batter down

Millions of constables, and put to flight

110 stringer: fornicator

112 withal: also, as well

116 froward: perverse

125 warren: land preserved for the breeding of rabbits

127 whilom: while (archaic)

128 whether: which

133 tiller: a) beam of a crossbow; b) sexual quibble

137 proverb: 'I am sorry for you but I cannot cry'

139 maw: craving

Even that great watch of Midsummer day at night.  
 LUCE Beshrew me, sir, 'twere good I yielded then;  
 Weak women cannot hope, where valiant men  
 Have no resistance.

HUMPHREY Yield then, I am full  
 Of pity, though I say it, and can pull  
 Out of my pocket, thus, a pair of gloves.  
 Look, Lucy, look: the dog's tooth nor the dove's 150  
 Are not so white as these, and sweet they be,  
 And whipped about with silk, as you may see.  
 If you desire the price, shoot from your eye  
 A beam to this place, and you shall espy  
 F. S., which is to say, my sweetest honey,  
 They cost me three and two pence, or no money.

LUCE Well, sir, I take them kindly, and I thank you.  
 What would you more?

HUMPHREY Nothing.  
 LUCE Why then, farewell.

HUMPHREY Nor so, nor so; for, lady, I must tell,  
 Before we part, for what we met together; 160  
 God grant me time, and patience, and fair weather.

LUCE Speak, and declare your mind in terms so brief.  
 HUMPHREY I shall. Then, first and foremost, for relief  
 I call to you, if that you can afford it;  
 I care not at what price for, on my word, it  
 Shall be repaid again, although it cost me  
 More than I'll speak of now. For love hath tossed me  
 In furious blanket like a tennis-ball,  
 And now I rise aloft, and now I fall.

LUCE Alas, good gentleman, alas the day. 170

HUMPHREY I thank you heartily, and, as I say,  
 Thus do I still continue without rest,  
 I'th' morning like a man, at night a beast,  
 Roaring and bellowing mine own disquiet,  
 That much I fear, forsaking of my diet  
 Will bring me presently to that quandary,  
 I shall bid all adieu.

LUCE Now, by Saint Mary,  
 That were great pity.

HUMPHREY So it were, beshrew me.

Then ease me, lusty Luce, and pity show me.  
 LUCE Why, sir, you know my will is nothing worth 180  
 Without my father's grant; get his consent,  
 And then you may with assurance try me.

HUMPHREY The worshipful your sire will not deny me;  
 For I have asked him, and he hath replied,  
 'Sweet Master Humphrey, Luce shall be thy bride'.

LUCE Sweet Master Humphrey, then I am content.

HUMPHREY And so am I, in truth.

LUCE Yet take me with you;  
 There is another clause must be annexed,  
 And this it is: I swore and will perform it,  
 No man shall ever joy me as his wife 190  
 But he that stole me hence. If you dare venture,  
 I am yours—you need not fear, my father loves you—  
 If not, farewell for ever.

HUMPHREY Stay, nymph, stay;  
 I have a double gelding, coloured bay,  
 Sprung by his father from Barbarian kind;  
 Another for myself, though somewhat blind,  
 Yet true as trusty tree.

LUCE I am satisfied;  
 And so I give my hand. Our course must lie  
 Through Waltham Forest, where I have a friend  
 Will entertain us. So, farewell, Sir Humphrey, 200  
 And think upon your business. *Exit* LUCE

HUMPHREY Though I die,  
 I am resolved to venture life and limb  
 For one so young, so fair, so kind, so trim.

*Exit* HUMPHREY

WIFE By my faith and troth, George, and, as I am  
 virtuous, it is e'en the kindest young man that ever  
 trod on shoe leather. Well, go thy ways; if thou hast  
 her not, 'tis not thy fault.

CITIZEN I prithee, mouse, be patient; 'a shall have her,  
 or I'll make some of 'em smoke for't. 209

WIFE That's my good lamb, George. Fie, this stinking  
 tobacco kills me, would there were none in  
 England.—Now I pray, gentlemen, what good does  
 this stinking tobacco do you? Nothing, I warrant you;  
 make chimneys o'your faces.—Oh, husband,  
 husband, now, now, there's Rafe, there's Rafe.

144 that great watch: the annual pageant (held on 24 June) at which the City and livery companies mustered the militia and constabulary to serve for the following year

149 a pair of gloves: gloves were traditional love-tokens given at betrothals and weddings

152 whipped: embroidered

153–4 shoot from . . . this place: it was thought that a beam of light 'shot' from the eye returned with the image of what it struck

155 F.S.: a) Humphrey bought them for someone else; b) a merchant's mark; c) they were inherited

156 three and two pence: the gloves were expensive

167–8 For love . . . furious blanket: Don Quixote was humiliated in this way

175 diet: a common treatment for venereal disease

179 lusty: intended as 'pretty'

187 take me with you: let this be clear

190 joy: enjoy

194 double gelding: horse for two riders

195 Barbarian: Barbary, a famous breed of horses from the Saracen area of Africa

199 Waltham Forest: north of London in Hertfordshire

204 troth: truth

208 'a: he

209 smoke: suffer

211 tobacco: smoking was identified with 'gallants' and condemned in many circles. King James discussed the habit in *A Counterblast to Tobacco* (1604)

Enter RAFE like a grocer in's shop, with two prentices TIM and GEORGE reading *Palmerin of England*

CITIZEN Peace, fool, let Rafe alone. Hark you Rafe; do not strain yourself too much at the first.—Peace!—Begin, Rafe. 218

RAFE (*reads*) 'Then Palmerin and Trineus, snatching their lances from their dwarfs, and clasping their helmets, galloped amain after the giant; and Palmerin, having gotten a sight of him, came posting amain, saying: "Stay, traitorous thief, for thou mayst not so carry away her that is worth the greatest lord in the world", and with these words gave him a blow on the shoulder, that he struck him besides his elephant; and Trineus, coming to the knight that had Agricola behind him, set him soon besides his horse, with his neck broken in the fall, so that the princess, getting out of the throng, between joy and grief said: "All happy knight, the mirror of all such as follow arms, now may I be well assured of the love thou bearest me".' I wonder why the kings do not raise an army of fourteen or fifteen hundred thousand men, as big as the army that the Prince of Portigo brought against Rosicleer, and destroy these giants; they do much hurt to wandering damsels that go in quest of their knights. 238

WIFE Faith, husband, and Rafe says true; for they say the King of Portugal cannot sit at his meat, but the giants and the ettins will come and snatch it from him. 242

CITIZEN Hold thy tongue.—On, Rafe.

RAFE And certainly those knights are much to be commended, who neglecting their possessions, wander with a squire and a dwarf through the deserts to relieve poor ladies.

WIFE Ay, by my faith, are they, Rafe; let 'em say what they will, they are indeed. Our knights neglect their

SD *like a grocer in's shop*: Rafe wears the blue livery of an apprentice  
*Palmerin of England*: Rafe actually reads from *Palmerin d'Olivia* translated from the Spanish by Anthony Munday. *Palmerin of England* was the sequel  
 227 elephant: 'horse' in the original but the effect is to parody the book  
 228 Agricola: the princess 'Agirola' in the Spanish text and Munday's translation  
 set him . . . his horse: unhorsed him  
 231 mirror: model, paragon  
 235 Portigo: Portugal  
 236 Rosicleer: hero of Ortuñez de Calahorra's *Espejo de Principes y Caualleros*, one of the romances owned by Don Quixote (translated into English as *The Mirror of Knighthood* by Margaret Tyler (1578–1601))  
 237–8 wandering damsels . . . their knights: a reversal of romantic convention  
 241 ettins: giants (from German)

possessions well enough, but they do not the rest. 250  
 RAFE There are no such courteous and fair well-spoken knights in this age: they will call one 'the son of a whore', that Palmerin of England would have called 'fair sir', and one that Rosicleer would have called 'right beauteous damsel', they will call 'damned bitch'. 256

WIFE I'll be sworn will they, Rafe; they have called me so an hundred times about a scurvy pipe of tobacco.

RAFE But what brave spirit could be content to sit in his shop with a flappet of wood and a blue apron before him, selling mithridatum and dragon's water to visited houses, that might pursue feats of arms, and through his noble achievements procure such a famous history to be written of his heroic prowess?

CITIZEN Well said, Rafe, some more of those words, Rafe.

WIFE They go finely, by my troth. 267

RAFE Why should not I then pursue this course, both for the credit of myself and our company? For amongst all the worthy books of achievements I do not call to mind that I yet read of a grocer errant. I will be the said knight. Have you heard of any that hath wandered unfurnished of his squire and dwarf? My elder prentice Tim shall be my trusty squire, and little George my dwarf. Hence my blue apron! Yet in remembrance of my former trade, upon my shield shall be portrayed a burning pestle, and I will be called the Knight o'th' Burning Pestle.

WIFE Nay, I dare swear thou wilt not forget thy old trade; thou wert ever meek. 280

RAFE Tim.

TIM Anon.

RAFE My beloved squire, and George my dwarf, I charge you that from henceforth you never call me by any other name but the 'Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle', and that you never call any female by the name of a woman or wench, but 'Fair Lady', if she have her desires, if not, 'Distressed Damsel'; that you call all forests and heaths 'deserts', and all horses 'palfreys'. 290

WIFE This is very fine, faith. Do the gentlemen like

249–50 Our knights . . . the rest: possibly a reference to the sale of knighthoods by King James

251–6 There are . . . 'damned bitch': a parody of Gertrude's speech in *Eastward Ho!* (1605) by George Chapman, Ben Jonson and John Marston

260 flappet: shop's counter

261 mithridatum and dragon's water: a herbal medicine (named after King Mithridates and used against poisons) and another, stronger, preparation believed to cure fever. visited: i.e. by the plague

271 grocer errant: Kinney notes that there was, in fact, a precedent in the figure of Eustace in Thomas Heywood's *Four Prentices of London*

Rafe, think you, husband?  
 CITIZEN Ay, I warrant thee, the players would give all the shoes in their shop for him.  
 RAFE My beloved squire Tim, stand out. Admit this were a desert, and over it a knight errant pricking, and I should bid you inquire of his intents, what would you say?  
 TIM Sir, my master sent me to know whither you are riding? **300**  
 RAFE No, thus: 'Fair sir, the Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle commanded me to inquire upon what adventure you are bound, whether to relieve some distressed damsels, or otherwise'.  
 CITIZEN Whoreson blockhead cannot remember!  
 WIFE I'faith, and Rafe told him on't before—all the gentlemen heard him.—Did he not, gentlemen? Did not Rafe tell him on't? **309**  
 GEORGE Right Courteous and Valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle here is a distressed damsel, to have a halfpenny-worth of pepper.  
 WIFE That's a good boy. See, the little boy can hit it; by my troth, it's a fine child.  
 RAFE Relieve her with all courteous language. Now shut up shop; no more my prentice, but my trusty squire and dwarf. I must bespeak my shield and arming pestle. *Exeunt TIM and GEORGE*  
 CITIZEN Go thy ways, Rafe. As I'm a true man, thou art the best on 'em all. **320**  
 WIFE Rafe, Rafe.  
 RAFE What say you, mistress?  
 WIFE I prithee come again quickly, sweet Rafe.  
 RAFE By and by. *Exit RAFE*

*Enter JASPER and his mother, MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT*  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Give thee my blessing? No, I'll ne'er give thee my blessing, I'll see thee hanged first; it shall ne'er be said I gave thee my blessing. Th'art thy father's own son, of the right blood of the Merrythoughts. I may curse the time that e'er I knew thy father; he hath spent all his own, and mine too, and when I tell him of it, he laughs and dances, and sings, and cries, 'A merry heart lives long-a'. And thou art a wastethrift, and art run away from thy

294 shoes in their shop: boys' costumes were elaborate and costly  
 296 pricking: spurring on his horse  
 308 gentlemen: the other playgoers on the stage  
 318 arming: armorial  
 328 right: legitimate  
 332 'A merry heart lives long-a': adapted from the song sung by Autolycus in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1609), IV.iii.1113-16; a similar line is sung by Silence in his *Henry IV* (1597), V.iii.47  
 333 wastethrift: spendthrift

master that loved thee well, and art come to me; and I have laid up a little for my younger son Michael, and thou think'st to bezzle that, but thou shalt never be able to do it.

*Enter MICHAEL*

—Come hither Michael, come, Michael, down on thy knees; thou shalt have my blessing. **339**  
 MICHAEL I pray you, mother, pray to God to bless me.  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT God bless thee; but Jasper shall never have my blessing. He shall be hanged first, shall he not, Michael? How say'st thou?  
 MICHAEL Yes, forsooth, mother, and grace of God.  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT That's a good boy.  
 WIFE I'faith, it's a fine spoken child.  
 JASPER Mother, though you forget a parent's love, I must preserve the duty of a child.  
 I ran not from my master, nor return  
 To have your stock maintain my idleness. **350**  
 WIFE Ungracious child, I warrant him; hark how he chops logic with his mother!—Thou hadst best tell her she lies; do, tell her she lies.  
 CITIZEN If he were my son, I would hang him up by the heels, and flay him, and salt him, whoreson halter-sack!  
 JASPER My coming only is to beg your love, Which I must ever, though I never gain it.  
 And howsoever you esteem of me  
 There is no drop of blood hid in these veins **360**  
 But I remember well belongs to you  
 That brought me forth, and would be glad for you  
 To rip them all again, and let it out.  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT I'faith, I had sorrow enough for thee, God knows; but I'll hamper thee well enough. Get thee in, thou vagabond, get thee in, and learn of thy brother Michael.

*Exeunt JASPER and MICHAEL*

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*)  
 (*Sings*) *Nose, nose, jolly red nose,  
 And who gave thee this jolly red nose?* **369**  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Hark, my husband; he's singing and hoiting, and I'm fain to cark and care,

336 bezzle: squander (from embezzle)  
 344 forsooth: truly  
 350 stock: a) provisions; b) money  
 352 chops logic: formulates specious but cleverly conceived arguments  
 356 halter-sack: gallows bird  
 364-5 sorrow enough: in childbirth  
 365 hamper: a) basket for infants: b) prison fetters (as Jasper is a 'masterless man')  
 368-9 *Nose, nose . . . red nose?*: refrain from *Deuteromelia* (1609) by Thomas Ravenscroft  
 371 hoiting: revelling, roistering  
 cark: carp, fret

and all little enough.—Husband, Charles, Charles Merrythought.

Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) *Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves,  
And they gave me this jolly red nose.*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT If you would consider your state, you would have little list to sing, iwis.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT It should never be considered while it were an estate, if I thought it would spoil my singing. 380

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT But how wilt thou do, Charles? Thou art an old man, and thou canst not work, and thou hast not forty shillings left, and thou eatest good meat, and drinkest good drink, and laughest?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT And will do.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT But how wilt thou come by it, Charles? 388

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT How? Why, how have I done hitherto this forty years? I never came into my dining room, but at eleven and six o'clock I found excellent meat and drink o'th'table; my clothes were never worn out, but next morning a tailor brought me a new suit; and without question it will be so ever. Use makes perfectness. If all should fail, it is but a little straining myself extraordinary, and laugh myself to death.

WIFE It's a foolish old man this: is not he, George?

CITIZEN Yes, cony. 399

WIFE Give me a penny i'th'purse while I live, George.

CITIZEN Ay, by lady, cony, hold thee there.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Well, Charles, you promised to provide for Jasper, and I have laid up for Michael. I pray you, pay Jasper his portion; he's come home, and he shall not consume Michael's stock. He says his master turned him away, but I promise you truly, I think he ran away.

WIFE No indeed, Mistress Merrythought, though he be a notable gallows, yet I'll assure you his master did turn him away, even in this place; 'twas, i'faith, within this half hour, about his daughter; my husband was by. 412

CITIZEN Hang him, rogue. He served him well enough: love his master's daughter! By my troth, cony, if there were a thousand boys, thou wouldst spoil them all with taking their parts. Let his mother alone with him.

WIFE Ay, George, but yet truth is truth.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Where is Jasper? He's welcome how ever. Call him in; he shall have his portion. Is he merry? 421

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Ay, foul chive him, he is too merry.—Jasper! Michael!

Enter JASPER and MICHAEL

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Welcome, Jasper, though thou run'st away, welcome; God bless thee. 'Tis thy mother's mind thou shouldst receive thy portion. Thou hast been abroad, and I hope hast learned experience enough to govern it; thou art of sufficient years. Hold thy hand: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, there's ten shillings for thee. Thrust thyself into the world with that, and take some settled course. If fortune cross thee, thou hast a retiring place; come home to me; I have twenty shillings left. Be a good husband, that is, wear ordinary clothes, eat the best meat, and drink the best drink; be merry, and give to the poor, and believe me, thou hast no end of thy goods.

JASPER Long may you live free from all thought of ill, And long have cause to be thus merry still.

But, father— 440

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT No more words, Jasper, get thee gone; thou hast my blessing; thy father's spirit upon thee. Farewell, Jasper.

(Sings) *But yet, or ere you part, oh cruel,  
Kiss me, kiss me, sweeting, mine own dear jewel.*

So, now begone; no words. Exit JASPER

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT So, Michael, now get thee gone too.

MICHAEL Yes forsooth, mother; but I'll have my father's blessing first. 450

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT No, Michael, 'tis no matter for his blessing; thou hast my blessing; begone. I'll fetch my money and jewels and follow thee; I'll stay

377 state: estate, dignity

list: desire

iwis: for certain

391 eleven and six o'clock: the hours of the day's main meals

394-5 Use makes perfectness: 'practice makes perfect' (proverbial)

400 Give me . . . I live: i.e. never leave me destitute

401 hold thee there: stick to that

404 portion: inheritance

405 stock: inheritance

409 notable gallows: deserving of hanging

416 taking their parts: a) supporting them; b) pun on sexual organs

420 how ever: in any case

422 foul chive: ill betide

427-37 Thou has . . . thy goods: parody of *Old Fortunatus* (1599) by Thomas Dekker

432 cross: oppose

434 Be a good husband: prudent (as in 'husbanding' his goods)

444-5 *But yet . . . dear jewel*: from Song XV in *First Book of Songs or Airs* (1597) by John Dowland

no longer with him, I warrant thee. (*Exit* MICHAEL)  
Truly, Charles, I'll begone too.  
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT What! You will not?  
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Yes, indeed will I.  
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT  
(*Sings*) *Hey-bo, farewell, Nan,  
I'll never trust wench more again, if I can.* 459  
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT You shall not think, when  
all your own is gone, to spend that I have been  
scraping up for Michael.  
OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Farewell, good wife, I expect it  
not; all I have to do in this world is to be merry,  
which I shall, if the ground be not taken from me;  
and if it be,  
(*Sings*) *When earth and seas from me are reft,  
The skies aloft for me are left.*

*Exeunt*

FINIS ACTUS PRIMI

## Interlude I

BOY *danceth. Music*

WIFE I'll be sworn he's a merry old gentleman for all  
that. Hark, hark, husband, hark! Fiddles, fiddles! Now  
surely they go finely. They say 'tis present death for  
these fiddlers to tune their rebecks before the great  
Turk's grace, is't not, George? But look, look, here's a  
youth dances.—Now, good youth, do a turn o'th'  
toe.—Sweetheart, i'faith, I'll have Rafe come and do  
some of his gambols.—He'll ride the wild mare,  
gentlemen, 'twould do your hearts good to see him.—  
I thank you, kind youth; pray, bid Rafe come. 10  
CITIZEN Peace, cony.—Sirrah, you scurvy boy, bid the  
players send Rafe, or by God's [. . .] and they do not,  
I'll tear some of their periwigs beside their heads: this  
is all riff-raff.

*Exit* BOY

460 think: i.e. stop to think, but

467 *reft*: taken away

3 present: instant

4 rebecks: early fiddles

5 Turk's grace: some seventeenth-century travellers  
reported that Sultans were feared for their impatience

8 gambols: leaping

8–9 wild mare: she means see-saw (proverbial for sexual  
intercourse)12 God's [. . .]: the omitted word is probably 'body' (Christ's  
body on the cross). Some eds note the Act to Restrain  
the Abuses of the Players (1606) as an explanation for  
this omission; compare Act II, l. 24513 periwigs: wigs were frequently worn by actors in  
performance

## Act II

*Enter* MERCHANT *and* HUMPHREY

MERCHANT And how, faith, how goes it now, son  
Humphrey?  
HUMPHREY Right worshipful, and my beloved friend  
And father dear, this matter's at an end.  
MERCHANT 'Tis well—it should be so, I'm glad the girl  
Is found so tractable.  
HUMPHREY Nay, she must whirl  
From hence (and you must wink; for so, I say,  
The story tells) tomorrow before day.  
WIFE George, dost thou think in thy conscience now  
'twill be a match? Tell me but what thou think'st,  
sweet rogue. Thou seest the poor gentleman, dear  
heart, how it labours and throbs, I warrant you, to be  
at rest. I'll go move the father for't. 12  
CITIZEN No, no, I prithee sit still, honeysuckle; thou'll  
spoil all. If he deny him, I'll bring half a dozen good  
fellows myself, and in the shutting of an evening  
knock't up, and there's an end.  
WIFE I'll buss thee for that, i'faith, boy. Well, George,  
well, you have been a wag in your days, I warrant  
you; but God forgive you, and I do with all my heart.  
MERCHANT How was it, son? You told me that  
tomorrow 20  
Before day break you must convey her hence?  
HUMPHREY I must, I must, and thus it is agreed:  
Your daughter rides upon a brown-bay steed,  
I on a sorrel, which I bought of Brian,  
The honest host of the Red Roaring Lion,  
In Waltham situate. Then, if you may,  
Consent in seemly sort, lest by delay  
The fatal sisters come and do the office,  
And then you'll sing another song.  
MERCHANT Alas,  
Why should you be thus full of grief to me, 30  
That do willing as yourself agree  
To anything, so it be good and fair?  
Then steal her when you will, if such a pleasure  
Content you both; I'll sleep and never see it,  
To make your joys more full. But tell me why  
You may not here perform your marriage?  
WIFE God's blessing o'thy soul, old man! I'faith, thou

6 wink: turn a blind eye

15 shutting of an evening: dusk

16 knock't up: put an end to this

17 buss: kiss

18 wag: mischievous youth

24 sorrel: chestnut-coloured horse

25 host: publican

26 situate: located

28 fatal sisters: the Three Furies who control a man's life

30 full of grief to me: 'complain about me'

art loath to part true hearts, I see.—'A has her, George, and I'm as glad on't.—Well, go thy ways, Humphrey, for a fair-spoken man; I believe thou hast not thy fellow within the walls of London; and I should say the suburbs too I should not lie.—Why dost not rejoice with me, George? 43

CITIZEN If I could but see Rafe again, I were as merry as mine host, i'faith.

HUMPHREY The cause you seem to ask, I thus declare (Help me, oh Muses nine): your daughter sware

A foolish oath, the more it was the pity;

Yet none but myself within this city

Shall dare to say so, but a bold defiance 50

Shall meet him, were he of the noble science.

And yet she sware, and yet why did she swear?

Truly, I cannot tell, unless it were

For her own ease, for sure sometimes an oath,

Being sworn, thereafter is like cordial broth.

And this it was she swore: never to marry

But such a one whose mighty arm could carry

(As meaning me, for I am such a one)

Her bodily away through stick and stone,

Till both of us arrive, at her request, 60

Some ten miles off, in the wild Waltham Forest.

MERCHANT If this be all, you shall not need to fear

Any denial in your love. Proceed;

I'll neither follow nor repent the deed.

HUMPHREY Good night, twenty good nights, and twenty more.

And twenty more good nights—that makes threescore. *Exeunt*

*Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT with jewel casket and purse of money, and her son MICHAEL*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Come Michael, art thou not weary, boy?

MICHAEL No, forsooth, mother, not I.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Where be we now, child? 70

MICHAEL Indeed, forsooth, mother, I cannot tell, unless we be at Mile End. Is not all the world Mile End, mother?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT No, Michael, not all the world, boy; but I can assure thee, Michael, Mile End

42 suburbs: ironic, since these were the unsavoury areas beyond the jurisdiction of the city authorities

47 Muses nine: ironic, since the Muses inspire anything but pledges

51 noble science: fencing or boxing

55 cordial: restorative

65–6 Good night . . . makes threescore: a parody of many speeches from plays, including the balcony scene from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (c. 1595)

72 Mile End: a hamlet one mile beyond the old walls of the city (on the road beyond Aldgate) used as a training ground for the militia of citizen soldiers

is a goodly matter; there has been a pitch-field, my child, between the naughty Spaniels and the English men; and the Spaniels ran away, Michael, and the English men followed. My neighbour Coxstone was there, boy, and killed them all with a birding piece.

MICHAEL Mother, forsooth— 81

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT What says my white boy?

MICHAEL Shall not my father go with us too?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT No, Michael, let thy father

go snick up; he shall never come between a pair of

sheets with me again while he lives. Let him stay at

home and sing for his supper, boy. Come, child, sit

down, and I'll show my boy fine knacks indeed. Look

here, Michael, here's a ring, and here's a brooch, and

here's a bracelet, and here's two rings more, and

here's money and gold by th'eye, my boy. 91

MICHAEL Shall I have all this, mother?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Ay, Michael, thou shalt have all, Michael.

CITIZEN How lik'st thou this, wench?

WIFE I cannot tell; I would have Rafe, George; I'll see

no more else, indeed la, and I pray you let the youths

understand so much by word of mouth; for I tell you

truly, I'm afraid o' my boy. Come, come, George,

let's be merry and wise. The child's a fatherless child;

and say they should put him into a strait pair of

gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass: he would never

grow after it. 103

*Enter RAPE, TIM as SQUIRE, and GEORGE as DWARF*

CITIZEN Here's Rafe, here's Rafe.

WIFE How do you, Rafe? You are welcome Rafe, as I

may say; it's a good boy, hold up thy head, and be not

afraid; we are thy friends, Rafe; the gentlemen will

praise thee, Rafe, if thou play'st thy part with

audacity. Begin, Rafe, o'God's name. 109

RAPE My trusty squire, unlace my helm; give me my hat. Where are we, or what desert may this be?

76 pitch-field: mock battle, one of the many kinds of entertainment staged at Mile End in addition to the musters of the militia which were themselves often seen as a source of entertainment

77 naughty: wicked

78 Spaniels: Spanish

80 birding piece: amateurish gun

82 white: darling (white boy could mean favourite son)

85 snick up: hang himself

88 knacks: trinkets (as in 'knick-knacks')

91 by th'eye: unlimited in quantity

97 youths: boy actors

101 strait: tight

102 gaskins: breeches

knot-grass: a weed supposed to stunt growth (and hinder sexuality); see Lysander's comment in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (c. 1595), III.ii.329–31

GEORGE Mirror of knighthood, this is, as I take it, the perilous Waltham Down, in whose bottom stands the enchanted valley.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Oh Michael, we are betrayed, we are betrayed! Here be giants! Fly, boy; fly, boy; fly!

*Exeunt* MOTHER and MICHAEL *dropping purse and casket*

RAFE Lace on my helm again. What noise is this?  
A gentle lady flying the embrace  
Of some uncourteous knight? I will relieve her. 120  
Go, squire, and say, the knight that wears this pestle  
In honour of all ladies, swears revenge  
Upon that recreant coward that pursues her.  
Go comfort her, and that same gentle squire  
That bears her company.

TIM I go brave knight. *Exit*

RAFE My trusty dwarf and friend, reach me my shield,  
And hold it while I swear. First by my knighthood;  
Then by the soul of Amadis de Gaul,  
My famous ancestor; then by my sword  
The beautiful Brionella girt about me; 130  
By this bright burning pestle, of mine honour  
The living trophy; and by all respect  
Due to distressed damsels: here I vow  
Never to end the quest of this fair lady  
And that forsaken squire, till by my valour  
I gain their liberty.

GEORGE Heaven bless the knight 136  
That thus relieves poor errant gentlewomen. *Exeunt*

WIFE Ay, marry, Rafe, this has some savour in't.—  
I would see the proudest of them all offer to carry his  
books after him. But, George, I will not have him go  
away so soon—I shall be sick if he go away, that I  
shall. Call Rafe again, George, call Rafe again; I  
prithe, sweetheart, let him come fight before me,  
and let's ha' some drums and some trumpets, and let  
him kill all that comes near him, and thou lov'st me,  
George. 146

CITIZEN Peace a little, bird; he shall kill them all, and  
they were twenty more on 'em than there are.

*Enter* JASPER

JASPER Now, Fortune, if thou be'st not only ill,

112 GEORGE: from this point QI substitutes the speech prefix DWARFE for GEORGE

123 recreant: a) dishonourable; b) traitorous

128 Amadis de Gaul: a Spanish knight, hero of a romance named after him (translated by Anthony Munday in parts from 1590 to 1618)

130 Brionella: mistress of Palmerin's friend, Ptolome girt: fastened

139-40 carry his books: 'follow like a lowly pedant' (Hattaway)

149-52 Fortune, if . . . And stand: Jasper wants the wheel of Fortune (governing his fate) to raise rather than lower him (thus showing its happier face)

Show me thy better face, and bring about 150  
Thy desperate wheel, that I may climb at length  
And stand. This is our place of meeting  
If love have any constancy. Oh age,  
Where only wealthy men are counted happy!  
How shall I please thee, how deserve thy smiles,  
When I am only rich in misery?  
My father's blessing, and this little coin  
Is my inheritance, a strong revenue  
From earth thou art, and to earth I give thee.

*Casts the money away*

There grow and multiply, whilst fresher air 160  
Breeds me a fresher fortune.—How, illusion?

*Spies the casket*

What, hath the devil coined himself before me?  
'Tis metal good, it rings well; I am walking,  
And taking too, I hope. Now God's dear blessing  
Upon his heart that left it here. 'Tis mine;  
These pearls, I take it, were not left for swine. *Exit*

WIFE I do not like that this unthrifty youth should  
embezzle away the money; the poor gentlewoman his  
mother will have a heavy heart for it, God knows.

CITIZEN And reason good, sweetheart. 170

WIFE But let him go. I'll tell Rafe a tale in's ear shall  
fetch him again with a wanion, I warrant him, if he  
be above ground; and besides, George, here are a  
number of sufficient gentlemen can witness, and  
myself, and yourself, and the musicians, if we be  
called in question. But here comes Rafe, George;  
thou shalt hear him speak, an he were an emperal.

*Enter* RAFE and GEORGE as DWARF

RAFE Comes not Sir Squire again?

GEORGE Right courteous knight,  
Your squire doth come and with him comes the lady,

*Enter* MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL and TIM  
as SQUIRE

For and the Squire of Damsels, as I take it. 180

159 From earth . . . give thee: i.e. from dust to dust (in the sense of the cycle of Fortune)

160 grow and multiply: parody of Christ's parable of the talents (Matthew 25.14-30)

162 coined: formed

166 These pearls . . . for swine: see Matthew 7.6

168 embezzle: squander

172 wanion: vengeance

174 sufficient: able

177 an: as if

emperal: emperor

180 For and: as well as

the Squire of Damsels: 'In Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* [1590-6], III.vii.51ff, appears the Squire of Dames whose task it is to find three hundred ladies who would "abide for ever chaste and sound". When Satyrane meets him he has found three' (Hattaway)



RAFE Madam, if any service or devoir  
Of a poor errant knight may right your wrongs,  
Command it; I am prest to give you succour,  
For to the holy end I bear my armour.  
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Alas sir, I am a poor  
gentlewoman, and I have lost my money in this  
forest.  
RAFE Desert, you would say, lady, and not lost  
Whilst I have sword and lance. Dry up your tears  
Which ill befit the beauty of that face, 190  
And tell the story, if I may request it,  
Of your disastrous fortune.  
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Out, alas! I left a thousand  
pound, a thousand pound, e'en all the money I had  
laid up for this youth, upon the sight of your  
mastership; you looked so grim, and, as I may say it,  
saving your presence, more like a giant than a mortal  
man.  
RAFE I am as you are, lady; so are they  
All mortal. But why weeps this gentle squire? 200  
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Has he not cause to weep,  
do you think, when he hath lost his inheritance?  
RAFE Young hope of valour, weep not; I am here  
That will confound thy foe and pay it dear  
Upon his coward head, that dares deny  
Distressed squires and ladies equity.  
I have but one horse, on which shall ride  
This lady fair behind me, and before  
This courteous squire; fortune will give us more  
Upon our next adventure. Fairly speed 210  
Beside us, squire and dwarf, to do us need. *Exeunt*  
CITIZEN Did not I tell you, Nell, what your man would  
do? By the faith of my body, wench, for clean action  
and good delivery they may all cast their caps at him.  
WIFE And so they may, i'faith, for I dare speak it  
boldly, the twelve companies of London cannot  
match him, timber for timber. Well, George, and he  
be not inveigled by some of these paltry players, I ha'  
much marvel; but, George, we ha' done our parts if  
the boy have any grace to be thankful. 220  
CITIZEN Yes, I warrant thee, duckling.

*Enter HUMPHREY and LUCE*

181 devoir: duty (in chivalric terms)  
183 prest: prepared, from *prêt* (French)  
185-7 I am . . . this forest: see *Palmerin d'Olivia*: 'Palmerin  
and Ptoleme met with a Damsel, who made great moan  
for a casket which two knights had forcibly taken from  
her' (I.21)  
200 All: wholly  
206 equity: justice  
213 clean: adroit  
214 cast their caps at: give up trying to imitate  
216 twelve companies: see *Induction*, l. 14n  
217 timber for timber: like for like  
218 inveigled: boys were sometime kidnapped as possible actors

HUMPHREY Good Mistress Luce, however I in fault am  
For your lame horse, you're welcome unto Waltham.  
But which way now to go or what to say  
I know not truly till it be broad day.  
LUCE Oh fear not, Master Humphrey, I am guide  
For this place good enough.  
HUMPHREY Then up and ride,  
Or, if it please you, walk for your repose,  
Or sit, or if you will, go pluck a rose;  
Either of which shall be indifferent 230  
To your good friend and Humphrey, whose consent  
Is so entangled ever to your will,  
As the poor harmless horse is to the mill.  
LUCE Faith, and you say the word, we'll e'en sit down  
And take a nap.  
HUMPHREY 'Tis better in the town,  
Where we may nap together; for, believe me,  
To sleep without a snatch would mickle grieve me.  
LUCE You're merry, Master Humphrey.  
HUMPHREY So I am,  
And have been ever merry from my dam.  
LUCE Your nurse had the less labour.  
HUMPHREY Faith, it may be,  
Unless it were by chance I did beray me. 241  
*Enter JASPER*  
JASPER Luce, dear friend Luce!  
LUCE Here, Jasper.  
JASPER You are mine.  
HUMPHREY If it be so, my friend, you use me fine;  
What do you think I am?  
JASPER An arrant noddy.  
HUMPHREY A word of obloquy! Now, by God's body,  
I'll tell thy master, for I know thee well.  
JASPER Nay, and you be so forward for to tell,  
Take that, and that, and tell him, sir, I gave it,  
*Beats him*  
And say I paid you well.  
HUMPHREY Oh, sir, I have it,  
And do confess the payment. Pray be quiet. 250  
JASPER Go, get to your night-cap and the diet

229 pluck a rose: a) urinate (most eds); b) euphemism for  
defecate (Wine)  
235 nap: a) sleep; b) drink  
237 snatch: snack  
mickle: much (northern English and still used in  
Scotland)  
239 dam: mother  
241 beray: befoul myself  
244 arrant noddy: itinerant fool (or simpleton)  
245 God's body: see *Interlude I*, l. 12n  
250 confess: acknowledge  
quiet: at peace  
251 night-cap: nightcaps were especially worn during ill  
health

To cure your beaten bones.  
 LUCE Alas, poor Humphrey,  
 Get thee some wholesome broth with sage and  
 comfrey;  
 A little oil of roses and a feather  
 To 'noint thy back withal.  
 HUMPHREY When I came hither,  
 Would I had gone to Paris with John Dory.  
 LUCE Farewell, my pretty Nump; I am very sorry  
 I cannot bear thee company.  
 HUMPHREY Farewell;  
 The devil's dam was ne'er so banged in hell. 259  
*Exeunt LUCE and JASPER. Manet HUMPHREY*  
 WIFE This young Jasper will prove me another thing,  
 o'my conscience, and he may be suffered. George,  
 dost not see, George, how 'a swaggers, and flies at the  
 very heads o'folks as he were a dragon? Well, if I do  
 not do his lesson for wronging the poor gentleman, I  
 am no true woman. His friends that brought him up  
 might have been better occupied, iwis, than ha'  
 taught him these fegaries; he's e'en in the highway to  
 the gallows, God bless him.  
 CITIZEN You're too bitter, cony; the young man may  
 do well enough for all this. 270  
 WIFE Come hither, Master Humphrey; has he hurt you?  
 Now beshrew his fingers for't. Here, sweetheart, here's  
 some green ginger for thee. Now beshrew my heart,  
 but 'a has peppernel in's head as big as a pullet's egg.  
 Alas, sweet lamb, how thy temples beat! Take the  
 peace on him, sweetheart, take the peace on him.

*Enter a BOY*

CITIZEN No, no, you talk like a foolish woman. I'll ha'  
 Rafe fight with him, and swinge him up well-  
 favouredly. Sirrah boy, come hither; let Rafe come in  
 and fight with Jasper. 280  
 WIFE Ay, and beat him well; he's an unhappy boy.  
 BOY Sir, you must pardon us; the plot of our play lies

253 comfrey: medicinal plant (*symphytum officinale*) with pink-purple or cream flowers found near ditches and streams; common in the south of England  
 256 John Dory: hero of a song (music by Thomas Ravenscroft, 1609) who is captured by highwaymen on his way to visit the King of France  
 257 Nump: a) a fool; b) nickname for Humphrey  
 259 The devil's . . . in hell: reference to Morality plays in which the devil and his kin were belaboured by vices  
 267 fegaries: vagaries, pranks  
 273 green ginger: medicine to relieve aches and pains  
 274 peppernel: lump, swelling  
 275-6 Take the peace on him: obtain sureties for his good conduct  
 278 with: for, on his behalf  
 swinge: thrash  
 278-9 well-favouredly: thoroughly  
 281 unhappy: good-for-nothing

contrary, and 'twill hazard the spoiling of our play.  
 CITIZEN Plot me no plots. I'll ha' Rafe come out; I'll  
 make your house too hot for you else.  
 BOY Why, sir, he shall; but if anything fall out of order,  
 the gentlemen must pardon us.  
 CITIZEN Go your ways, goodman boy. (*Exit BOY*)—I'll  
 hold him a penny he shall have his bellyful of fighting  
 now. Ho, here comes Rafe; no more. 290

*Enter RAFE, MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, MICHAEL, TIM as SQUIRE, and GEORGE as DWARF*

RAFE What knight is that, squire? Ask him if he keep  
 The passage, bound by love of lady fair,  
 Or else but prickant.  
 HUMPHREY Sir, I am no knight,  
 But a poor gentleman, that this same night  
 Had stolen from me on yonder green  
 My lovely wife, and suffered (to be seen  
 Yet extant on my shoulders) such a greeting  
 That whilst I live I shall think of that meeting.  
 WIFE Ay, Rafe, he beat him unmercifully, Rafe; and  
 thou spar'st him, Rafe, I would thou wert hanged. 300  
 CITIZEN No more, wife, no more.  
 RAFE Where is the caitiff wretch hath done this deed?  
 Lady, your pardon, that I may proceed  
 Upon the quest of this injurious knight.  
 And thou, fair squire, repute me not the worse,  
 In leaving the great venture of the purse  
 And the rich casket till some better leisure.

*Enter JASPER and LUCE*

Here comes the broker hath purloined my treasure.  
 RAFE Go, squire, and tell him I am here,  
 An errant knight at arms, to crave delivery 310  
 Of that fair lady to her own knight's arms.  
 If he deny, bid him take choice of ground,  
 And so defy him.  
 TIM From the knight that bears  
 The golden pestle, I defy thee, knight,  
 Unless thou make fair restitution  
 Of that bright lady.  
 JASPER Tell the knight that sent thee  
 He is an ass, and I will keep the wench  
 And knock his head-piece.  
 RAFE Knight, thou art but dead,

283 spoiling: 'George and Nell have attempted to redo the play by adding Rafe: now they attempt to rewrite it; eventually they will want to displace it' (Kinney)  
 289 hold: bet  
 291-2 keep/The passage: guard the entrance to the castle  
 293 prickant: riding fast (but with sexual connotation)  
 296 wife: i.e. betrothed  
 302 caitiff: wicked  
 304 injurious: malicious  
 308 broker: pimp

If thou recall not thy uncourteous terms.  
 WIFE Break's pate, Rafe; break's pate, Rafe, soundly. 320  
 JASPER Come, knight, I am ready for you. Now your  
 pestle *Snatches away his pestle*  
 Shall try what temper, sir, your mortar's of.  
 (Recites) 'With that he stood upright in his stirrups,  
 and gave the Knight of the Calf-skin such a knock  
 (Knocks RAFE down) that he forsook his horse and  
 down he fell; and then he leaped upon him, and  
 plucking off his helmet—'  
 HUMPHREY Nay, and my noble knight be down so  
 soon,  
 Though I can scarcely go, I needs must run.

*Exeunt HUMPHREY and RAFE*  
 WIFE Run, Rafe; run, Rafe; run for thy life, boy; Jasper  
 comes, Jasper comes. 331  
 JASPER Come, Luce, we must have other arms for you;  
 Humphrey and Golden Pestle, both adieu. *Exeunt*  
 WIFE Sure the devil, God bless us, is in this springald.  
 Why, George, didst ever see such a fire-drake? I am  
 afraid my boy's miscarried; if he be, though he were  
 Master Merrythought's son a thousand times, if there  
 be any law in England, I'll make some of them smart  
 for't. 339

CITIZEN No, no, I have found out the matter,  
 sweetheart: Jasper is enchanted; as sure as we are here,  
 he is enchanted. He could no more have stood in  
 Rafe's hands than I can stand in my Lord Mayor's. I'll  
 have a ring to discover all enchantments, and Rafe  
 shall beat him yet. Be no more vexed, for it shall be so.

*Enter RAFE, TIM as SQUIRE, GEORGE as DWARF,  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL*

WIFE Oh, husband, here's Rafe again.—Stay, Rafe, let  
 me speak with thee. How dost thou, Rafe? Art thou  
 not shroadly hurt? The foul great lungies laid  
 unmercifully on thee; there's some sugar-candy for  
 thee. Proceed, thou shalt have another bout with him.  
 CITIZEN If Rafe had him at the fencing-school, if he did  
 not make a puppy of him, and drive him up and down  
 the school, he should ne'er come in my shop more.  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Truly, Master Knight of  
 the Burning Pestle, I am weary. 355

320 pate: head

324 Calf-skin: refers to the calf-skin vellum on which old  
 romances were written

329 go: walk

334 springald: stripling

335 fire-drake: dragon

336 miscarried: come to harm

342 have stood in: withstood

348 shroadly: severely (archaic form of 'shrewdly')

lungies: louts (from Longinus, the soldier who thrust a  
 spear into the body of Christ)

352 puppy: coward

MICHAEL Indeed la, mother, and I am very hungry.  
 RAFE Take comfort, gentle dame, and you, fair squire,  
 For in this desert there must needs be placed  
 Many strong castles held by courteous knights;  
 And till I bring you safe to one of those, 360  
 I swear by this my order ne'er to leave you.

WIFE Well said, Rafe.—George, Rafe was ever  
 comfortable, was he not?

CITIZEN Yes, duck.

WIFE I shall ne'er forget him, when we had lost our  
 child (you know it was strayed almost, alone, to  
 Puddle Wharf, and the criers were abroad for it, and  
 there it had drowned itself but for a sculler), Rafe was  
 the most comfortablest to me: 'Peace, mistress', says  
 he, 'let it go; I'll get you another as good'. Did he not,  
 George, did he not say so? 371

CITIZEN Yes indeed did he, mouse.

GEORGE I would we had a mess of pottage and a pot of  
 drink, squire, and were going to bed.

TIM Why, we are at Waltham town's end, and that's  
 the Bell Inn.

GEORGE Take courage, valiant knight, damsel, and  
 squire;

I have discovered, not a stone's cast off,  
 An ancient castle held by the old knight  
 Of the most holy order of the Bell, 380  
 Who gives to all knights errant entertain.  
 There plenty is of food, and all prepared  
 By the white hands of his own lady dear.  
 He hath three squires that welcome all his guests:  
 The first hight Chamberlino, who will see  
 Our beds prepared, and bring us snowy sheets,  
 Where never footman stretched his buttered hams;  
 The second hight Tapstero, who will see  
 Our pots full filled and no froth therein;  
 The third, a gentle squire, Ostlero hight 390  
 Who will our palfreys slick with wisps of straw,  
 And in the manger put them oats enough,

361 my order: i.e. of knighthood

363 comfortable: helpful

367 Puddle Wharf: Thames landing place at the foot of  
 St Andrew's Hill (now Puddle Dock, near Blackfriars  
 Bridge)

criers were abroad for it: one responsibility of town criers  
 was to help find lost children

368 sculler: either an oarsman or a light river boat

370 get: play on 'beget'

373 mess of pottage: stew of boiled vegetables (and  
 sometimes meat)

378 I have discovered: the episode that begins here, where an  
 inn is mistaken for a castle, is taken from Book I of *Don  
 Quixote*

385 hight: called (archaic)

387 Where never . . . buttered hams: footmen ran with their  
 masters' carriages and greased their calves to prevent cramp

391 slick: make sleek

And never grease their teeth with candle-snuff.  
WIFE That same dwarf's a pretty boy, but the squire's a  
groutnoll.

RAFE Knock at the gates, my squire, with stately lance.

Enter TAPSTER

TAPSTER Who's there?—You're welcome, gentlemen;  
will you see a room?

GEORGE Right courteous and valiant Knight of the  
Burning Pestle, this is the Squire Tapstero. 400

RAFE Fair Squire Tapstero, I, a wandering knight  
Hight of the Burning Pestle, in the quest  
Of this fair lady's casket and wrought purse  
Losing myself in this vast wilderness,  
Am to this castle well by fortune brought;  
Where, hearing of the goodly entertain  
Your knight of holy order of the Bell  
Gives to all damsels and all errant knights,  
I thought to knock, and now am bold to enter. 409

TAPSTER An't please you see a chamber, you are very  
welcome. Exeunt

WIFE George, I would have something done, and I  
cannot tell what it is.

CITIZEN What is it, Nell?

WIFE Why, George, shall Rafe beat nobody again?  
Prithee, sweetheart, let him.

CITIZEN So he shall, Nell; and if I join with him, we'll  
knock them all.

Enter HUMPHREY and MERCHANT

WIFE Oh, George, here's Master Humphrey again  
now, that lost Mistress Luce, and Mistress Luce's  
father. Master Humphrey will do somebody's errand,  
I warrant him. 422

HUMPHREY Father, it's true in arms I ne'er shall clasp  
her,

For she is stol'n away by your man Jasper.

WIFE I thought he would tell him.

MERCHANT Unhappy that I am to lose my child!  
Now I begin to think on Jasper's words,  
Who oft hath urged to me thy foolishness.  
Why didst thou let her go? Thou lov'st her not,  
That wouldst bring home thy life, and not bring her.

HUMPHREY Father, forgive me. Shall I tell you true? 431  
Look on my shoulders, they are black and blue.  
Whilst to and fro fair Luce and I were winding,  
He came and basted me with a hedge-binding.

393 grease their . . . with candle-snuff: a common trick which  
prevented horses from eating

395 groutnoll: blockhead

403 wrought: embroidered

421 errand: worthy deed (errant Q1)

434 basted: beat

MERCHANT Get men and horses straight; we will be  
there

Within this hour. You know the place again?

HUMPHREY I know the place where he my loins did  
swaddle.

I'll get six horses, and to each a saddle.

MERCHANT Meantime I'll go talk with Jasper's father.

Exeunt

WIFE George, what wilt thou lay with me now, that  
Master Humphrey has not Mistress Luce yet? Speak,  
George, what wilt thou lay with me? 442

CITIZEN No; Nell, I warrant thee Jasper is at  
Puckeridge with her by this.

WIFE Nay, George, you must consider Mistress Luce's  
feet are tender, and, besides, 'tis dark; and I promise  
you truly, I do not see how he should get out of  
Waltham Forest with her yet.

CITIZEN Nay, cony, what wilt thou lay with me that  
Rafe has her not yet? 450

WIFE I will not lay against Rafe, honey, because I have  
not spoken with him. But look, George, peace; here  
comes the merry old gentleman again.

Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) *When it was grown to dark midnight,  
And all were fast asleep,  
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,  
And stood at William's feet.* 457

I have money and meat and drink beforehand till  
tomorrow at noon; why should I be sad? Methinks I  
have half a dozen jovial spirits within me (sings) *I am  
three merry men, and three merry men.* To what end  
should any man be sad in this world? Give me a man  
that when he goes to hanging cries (sings) *Troll the  
black bowl to me!* and a woman that will sing a catch in  
her travail. I have seen a man come by my door with a

435 straight: at once

437 swaddle: beat soundly (from 'swathe')

440 lay: wager (with sexual connotation)

444 Puckeridge: a Hertfordshire village twenty-three miles  
north of London (and sixteen miles beyond Waltham  
Forest)

454-7 *When it . . . William's feet*: a version of a verse from 'Fair  
Margaret and Sweet William' (traditional)

456 *grimly*: grim-looking

460-1 *I am . . . merry men*: from a song that appears in *Old  
Wives' Tale* (1591) by George Peele

463-4 *Troll the . . . to me*: from a song that appears in *Summer's  
Last Will and Testament* (1592) by Thomas Nashe (1567-  
1601); see also 'The Second Three-Man's Song' from  
Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599)

463 *Troll*: pass

464 *black bowl*: drinking vessel

catch: short, often bawdy song

465 travail: labour

serious face, in a black cloak, without a hat-band, carrying his head as if he looked for pins in the street; I have looked out of my window half a year after, and have spied that man's head upon London Bridge. 'Tis vile. Never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work: his mind is of nothing but filching. 471

WIFE Mark this, George, 'tis worth noting; Godfrey my tailor, you know, never sings, and he had fourteen yards to make this gown; and I'll be sworn Mistress Pennistone the draper's wife had one made with twelve.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) 'Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood,  
More than wine, or sleep, or food;  
Let each man keep his heart at ease,  
No man dies of that disease. 480  
He that would his body keep  
From diseases, must not weep;  
But whoever laughs and sings,  
Never he his body brings  
Into fevers, gouts or rheums,  
Or lingeringly his lungs consumes,  
Or meets with achès in the bone,  
Or catarrhs, or griping stone,  
But contented lives for aye;  
The more he laughs, the more he may. 490

WIFE Look, George, how say'st thou by this, George? Is't not a fine old man?—Now God's blessing o' thy sweet lips.—When wilt thou be so merry, Geoge? Faith, thou art the frowning'st little thing, when thou art angry, in a country.

Enter MERCHANT

CITIZEN Peace, cony, thou shalt see him taken down too, I warrant thee. Here's Luce's father come now.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) As you came from Walsingham  
From that holy land,  
There met you not with my true love 500  
By the way as you came?

MERCHANT Oh, Master Merrythought, my daughter's gone!

This mirth becomes you not, my daughter's gone.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) Why, an if she be, what care I?  
Or let her come, or go, or tarry.

MERCHANT Mock not my misery; it is your son Whom I have made my own, when all forsook him, Has stol'n my only joy, my child, away.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) He set her on a milk-white steed,  
And himself upon a grey, 510  
He never turned his face again,  
But he bore her quite away.

MERCHANT Unworthy of the kindness I have shown To thee and thine! Too late I well perceive Thou art consenting to my daughter's loss.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Your daughter! What a stir's here wi' yer daughter? Let her go, think no more on her, but sing loud. If both my sons were on the gallows, I would sing,

(Sings) Down, down, down they fall, 520  
Down, and arise they never shall.

MERCHANT Oh, might I behold her once again, And she once more embrace her aged sire.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Fie, how scurvily this goes. 'And she once more embrace her aged sire'? You'll make a dog on her will ye? She cares much for her aged sire, I warrant you.

(Sings) She cares not for her daddy, nor  
She cares not for her mammy;  
For she is, she is, she is, she is 530  
My Lord of Lowgave's lassy.

MERCHANT For this thy scorn, I will pursue that son Of thine to death.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Do, and when you ha' killed him,

(Sings) Give him flowers enow, palmer, give him  
flowers enow,  
Give him red, and white, and blue, green,  
and yellow.

MERCHANT I'll fetch my daughter.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT I'll hear no more o' your daughter; it spoils my mirth. 540

MERCHANT I say, I'll fetch my daughter.

466–7 without a hat-band: sign of a Puritan

469–70 head upon London Bridge: after execution the heads of traitors were displayed on London Bridge as a warning to others; see *Edward II*, I.i.118

471 filching: stealing

473 my tailor: tailors were believed to be dishonest fourteen yards: see *The Roaring Girl*, II.ii.90n

487 achès: pronounced 'aitches'

488 catarrhs: inflammation of the nose and throat griping stone: painful gallstone

498–501 *As you . . . you came?*: a popular ballad about a village in Norfolk that was, until 1538, a major Roman Catholic shrine to the Virgin Mary

504–5 *Why, an . . . or tarry*: from 'Farewell, Dear Love', a popular song that appears in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601–2), II.iii.91

509–12 *He set . . . milk-white steed*: corresponds to a verse in 'The Ballad of the Knight and the Shepherd's Daughter'

520–1 *Down, down . . . never shall*: from 'Sorrow's Story' in John Dowland's *Second Book of Songs and Airs* (1600)

525–6 make a dog on her: Venturewell has called himself Luce's 'sire'

536 *enow*: enough  
*palmer*: pilgrim

## OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) *Was never man for lady's sake,  
Down, down,  
Tormented as I, poor Sir Guy,  
De derry down,  
For Lucy's sake, that lady bright,  
Down, down,  
As ever men beheld with eye,  
De derry down.*

MERCHANT I'll be revenged, by heaven.

550  
*Exeunt*

## FINIS ACTUS SECUNDI

## Interlude II

*Music*

WIFE How dost thou like this, George?

CITIZEN Why, this is well, cony; but if Rafe were hot  
once, thou shouldst see more.

WIFE The fiddlers go again, husband.

CITIZEN Ay, Nell, but this is scurvy music. I gave the  
whoreson gallows money, and I think he has not got  
me the waits of Southwark. If I hear 'em not anon,  
I'll twinge him by the ears.—You musicians, play  
'Baloo'.

WIFE No, good George, lets ha' 'Lachrimae'. 10

CITIZEN Why, this is it, cony.

WIFE It's all the better, George. Now, sweet lamb,  
what story is that painted upon the cloth? The  
Confutation of Saint Paul?

CITIZEN No, lamb, that's Rafe and Lucrece.

WIFE Rafe and Lucrece? Which Rafe? Our Rafe?

CITIZEN No, mouse, that was a Tartarian.

WIFE A Tartarian! Well, I would the fiddlers had done,  
that we might see our Rafe again.

542–9 *Was never . . . derry down*: from the medieval legend of  
Guy of Warwikk, a popular hero of romance and ballads

2 hot: aroused

8 twinge: tweak

9 'Baloo': a common word in the refrains of lullabies;  
possibly referring here to 'Lady Bothwell's Lamentation'

10 'Lachrimae': a set of pavans (courtly dances) by John  
Dowland (1605)

13 story is . . . the cloth?: a painted cloth (arras) or tapestry  
hung behind the stage

13–14 The Confutation of Saint Paul?: a bawdy malapropism  
for 'The Conversion of Saint Paul'

15 Rafe and Lucrece: bawdy pun on *The Rape of Lucrece*, a  
poem by Shakespeare (1594) and a play by Thomas  
Heywood (1608)

17 Tartarian: a) another mispronunciation, of (Sextus)  
Tarquinius who raped Lucrece: b) cant term for thief; c)  
reference to the proverbial cruelty toward women of the  
inhabitants of Tartary, north of the Himalayas

## Act III

Enter JASPER and LUCE

JASPER Come, my dear deer, though we have lost our way,  
We have not lost ourselves. Are you not weary  
With this night's wandering, broken from your rest,  
And frightened with the terror that attends  
The darkness of this wild unpeopled place?

LUCE No, my best friend, I cannot either fear  
Or entertain a weary thought, whilst you  
(The end of all my full desires) stand by me.  
Let them that lose their hopes, and live to languish  
Amongst the number of forsaken lovers, 10  
Tell the long weary steps, and number time,  
Start at a shadow, and shrink up their blood,  
Whilst I (possessed with all content and quiet)  
Thus take my pretty love, and thus embrace him.

JASPER You have caught me, Luce, so fast, that whilst I  
live

I shall become your faithful prisoner,  
And wear these chains for ever. Come, sit down  
And rest your body, too, too delicate  
For these disturbances. So, will you sleep?  
Come, do not be more able than you are; 20  
I know you are not skilful in these watches,  
For women are no soldiers; be not nice,  
But take it; sleep, I say.

LUCE I cannot sleep,  
Indeed I cannot, friend.

JASPER Why, then we'll sing,  
And try how that will work upon our senses.

LUCE I'll sing, or say, or anything but sleep.

JASPER Come, little mermaid, rob me of my heart  
With that enchanting voice.

LUCE You mock me, Jasper.

## SONG

JASPER *Tell me, dearest, what is love?*

LUCE *'Tis a lightning from above, 30*  
*'Tis an arrow, 'tis a fire,*  
*'Tis a boy they call Desire,*  
*'Tis a smile*  
*Doth beguile*

3 broken: roused

11 Tell: count

12 shrink up their blood: fear was thought to dry up the  
elements of the body

20 able: capable of endurance

21 watches: vigils

22 nice: reluctant, fastidious

23 take it: yield

29–42 *Tell me . . . love anew*: the music for this song has  
survived (see E. S. Lindsay in the further reading section  
for this play)

JASPER *The poor hearts of men that prove.  
Tell me more, are women true?*

LUCE *Some love change, and so do you.*

JASPER *Are they fair, and never kind?*

LUCE *Yes, when men turn with the wind.*

JASPER *Are they froward* 40

LUCE *Ever toward  
Those that love to love anew.*

JASPER Dissemble it no more; I see the god  
Of heavy sleep lay on his heavy mace  
Upon your eyelids.

LUCE I am very heavy. *She falls asleep*

JASPER Sleep, sleep, and quiet rest crown thy sweet  
thoughts.  
Keep from her fair blood distempers; startings,  
Horrors, and fearful shapes; let all her dreams  
Be joys, and chaste delights, embraces, wishes,  
And such new pleasures as the ravished soul  
Gives to the senses. So, my charms have took. 50  
Keep her, you powers divine, whilst I contemplate  
Upon the wealth and beauty of her mind.  
She is only fair and constant, only kind,  
And only to thee, Jasper. Oh my joys,  
Whither will you transport me? Let not fullness  
Of my poor buried hopes come up together  
And overcharge my spirits. I am weak.  
Some say (however ill) the sea and women  
Are governed by the moon: both ebb and flow, 60  
Both full of changes. Yet to them that know  
And truly judge, these but opinions are,  
And heresies to bring on pleasing war  
Between our tempers, that without these were  
Both void of after-love, and present fear,  
Which are the best of Cupid. Oh thou child  
Bred from despair, I dare not entertain thee,  
Having a love without the faults of women,  
And greater in her perfect goods than men;  
Which to make good, and please myself the stronger,  
Though certainly I am certain of her love, 71  
I'll try her, that the world and memory

35 *prove*: strive44 heavy mace: a mace was the emblem of Morpheus, the  
classical god of sleep

45 heavy: drowsy

47 distempers: mental or physical disorders

50 ravished: 'transported from the body' (Kinney)

54 is only: alone is

62-6 these but . . . of Cupid: 'empty and false notions that  
pleasantly disturb the balance of our emotions; for  
without these we should not experience either love in  
retrospect or the pangs of anxiety which are love's chief  
joys' (Hattaway)

70 make good: demonstrate

72 try: put to the test

May sing to aftertimes her constancy.  
*He draws his sword*

Luce, Luce, awake.

LUCE Why do you fright me, friend,  
With those distempered looks? What makes your  
sword  
Drawn in your hand? Who hath offended you?  
I prithee, Jasper, sleep; thou art wild with watching.

JASPER Come, make your way to heaven, and bid the  
world  
(With all the villainies that stick upon it)  
Farewell; you're for another life.

LUCE Oh Jasper, 80  
How have my tender years committed evil  
(Especially against the man I love)  
Thus to be cropped untimely?

JASPER Foolish girl,  
Canst thou imagine I could love his daughter,  
That flung me from my fortune into nothing,  
Discharged me his service, shut the doors  
Upon my poverty, and scorned my prayers,  
Sending me, like a boat without a mast,  
To sink or swim? Come, by this hand you die;  
I must have life and blood to satisfy 90  
Your father's wrongs.

WIFE Away, George, away; raise the watch at Ludgate,  
and bring a mittimus from the justice for this  
desperate villain.—Now I charge you, gentlemen, see  
the king's peace kept.—Oh, my heart, what a varlet's  
this to offer manslaughter upon the harmless  
gentlewoman!

CITIZEN I warrant thee, sweetheart, we'll have him  
hampered.

LUCE Oh, Jasper, be not cruel; 100  
If thou wilt kill me, smile and do it quickly,  
And let not many deaths appear before me.  
I am a woman made of fear and love,  
A weak, weak woman; kill not with thy eyes,  
They shoot me through and through. Strike, I am  
ready;  
And, dying, still I love thee.

*Enter* MERCHANT, HUMPHREY, *and his men*

MERCHANT Whereabouts?

JASPER (*Aside*) No more of this, now to myself again.

HUMPHREY There, there he stands with sword, like  
martial knight,  
Drawn in his hand; therefore beware the fight,

77 wild with watching: mad with anxiety

83 cropped untimely: 'cut off from life before my time'

92 Ludgate: a station for the watch (and used as a prison)

93 mittimus: a warrant, from its opening word 'we send'

99 hampered: confined

You that be wise; for, were I good Sir Bevis, 110  
I would not stay his coming, by your leaves.

MERCHANT Sirrah, restore my daughter.

JASPER Sirrah, no.

MERCHANT Upon him, then.

WIFE So, down with him, down with him, down with  
him! Cut him i'th' leg, boys, cut him i'th' leg!

MERCHANT Come your ways, minion. I'll provide a  
cage  
For you, you're grown so tame.—Horse her away.

HUMPHREY Truly I'm glad your forces have the day.

*Exeunt, manet JASPER*

JASPER They are gone, and I am hurt; my love is lost,  
Never to get again. Oh, me unhappy, 120  
Bleed, bleed, and die! I cannot. Oh my folly,  
Thou hast betrayed me! Hope, where art thou fled?  
Tell me if thou be'st anywhere remaining.  
Shall I but see my love again? Oh, no!  
She will not deign to look upon her butcher,  
Nor is it fit she should; yet I must venture.  
Oh, chance, or fortune, or whate'er thou art  
That men adore for powerful, hear my cry,  
And let me loving live, or losing die.

WIFE Is'a gone, George? 130

CITIZEN Ay, cony.

WIFE Marry, and let him go, sweetheart. By the faith o'  
my body, 'a has put me into such a fright that I  
tremble, as they say, as 'twere an aspen leaf. Look o'  
my little finger, George, how it shakes. Now, i'truth,  
every member of my body is the worse for't.

CITIZEN Come, hug in mine arms, sweet mouse; he  
shall not fright thee any more. Alas, mine own dear  
heart, how it quivers.

*Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT, RAFE, MICHAEL, TIM  
as SQUIRE, GEORGE as DWARF, HOST and a TAPSTER*

WIFE Oh, Rafe, how dost thou, Rafe? How hast thou  
slept tonight? Has the knight used thee well? 141

CITIZEN Peace, Nell; let Rafe alone.

TAPSTER Master, the reckoning is not paid.

RAFE Right courteous knight, who, for the order's sake  
Which thou hast ta'en, hang'st out the holy bell,  
As I this flaming pestle bear about,  
We render thanks to your puissant self,  
Your beauteous lady, and your gentle squires,

110 Sir Bevis: the hero of the famous medieval romance of  
Sir Bevis of Hampton

111 stay: wait for

116 minion: 'hussy'

117 you're: until you are

125 deign: condescend

141 tonight: i.e. last night

143 the reckoning: the bill for food, drink and  
accommodation at an inn

147 puissant: powerful, noble

For thus refreshing of our wearied limbs,  
Stiffened with hard achievements in wild desert. 150

TAPSTER Sir, there is twelve shillings to pay.

RAFE Thou merry squire Tapstero, thanks to thee  
For comforting our souls with double jug;  
And if advent'rous fortune prick thee forth,  
Thou jovial squire, to follow feats of arms,  
Take heed thou tender every lady's cause,  
Every true knight, and every damsel fair;  
But spill the blood of treacherous Saracens  
And false enchanters that with magic spells  
Have done to death full many a noble knight. 160

HOST Thou valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, give  
ear to me: there is twelve shillings to pay, and as I am  
a true knight, I will not bate a penny.

WIFE George, I pray thee tell me, must Rafe pay twelve  
shillings now?

CITIZEN No, Nell, no; nothing but the old knight is  
merry with Rafe.

WIFE Oh, is't nothing else? Rafe will be as merry as he.

RAFE Sir knight, this mirth of yours becomes you well;  
But to requite this liberal courtesy, 170  
If any of your squires will follow arms,  
He shall receive from my heroic hand  
A knighthood, by the virtue of this pestle.

HOST Fair knight, I thank you for your noble offer;  
Therefore, gentle knight,  
Twelve shillings you must pay, or I must cap you.

WIFE Look, George, did not I tell thee as much; the  
Knight of the Bell is in earnest. Rafe shall not be  
beholding to him—give him his money, George, and  
let him go snick up. 180

CITIZEN Cap Rafe? No.—Hold your hand, Sir Knight  
of the Bell; there's your money. Have you anything to  
say to Rafe now? Cap Rafe!

WIFE I would you should know it, Rafe has friends that  
will not suffer him to be capped for ten times so  
much, and ten times to the end of that.—Now take  
thy course, Rafe.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Come, Michael, thou and I  
will go home to thy father; he hath enough left to

151 twelve shillings: a modest amount for the services  
received

153 double jug: strong ale

154 advent'rous: hazardous  
prick thee forth: spur you on

156 tender: care for

158 Saracens: a loosely applied term; the 'enemies of the  
Crusaders, Moors who are the enemy of Don Quixote  
and, by extension, villains in the romances' (Kinney)

159 false enchanters: those whom Don Quixote believed  
could turn inns into castles

163 bate: deduct

176 cap: seize, arrest

179 beholding: indebted



- keep us a day or two, and we'll set fellows abroad to cry our purse and our casket. Shall we, Michael? 191
- MICHAEL Ay, I pray, mother. In truth my feet are full of chilblains with travelling.
- WIFE Faith, and those chilblains are a foul trouble. Mistress Merrythought, when your youth comes home, let him rub all the soles of his feet and the heels and his ankles with a mouse skin—or, if none of your people can catch a mouse, when he goes to bed let him roll his feet in the warm embers, and I warrant you he shall be well; and you may make him put his fingers between his toes and smell to them; it's very sovereign for his head if he be costive. 202
- MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, my son Michael and I bid you farewell; I thank your worship heartily for your kindness.
- RAFE Farewell, fair lady, and your tender squire. If, pricking through these deserts, I do hear Of any traitorous knight who through his guile Hath light upon your casket and your purse, 210 I will despoil him of them and restore them.
- MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT I thank your worship.  
*Exit with MICHAEL*
- RAFE Dwarf, bear my shield; squire, elevate my lance; And now farewell, you Knight of holy Bell.
- CITIZEN Ay, ay, Rafe, all is paid.
- RAFE But yet before I go, speak, worthy knight, If aught you do of sad adventures know, Where errant knight may through his prowess win Eternal fame, and free some gentle souls From endless bonds of steel and ling'ring pain. 220
- HOST (to TAPSTER) Sirrah, go to Nick the barber, and bid him prepare himself as I told you before, quickly.
- TAPSTER I am gone, sir. *Exit TAPSTER*
- HOST Sir knight, this wilderness affordeth none But the great venture where full many a knight Hath tried his prowess and come off with shame, And where I would not have you lose your life Against no man, but furious fiend of hell.
- RAFE Speak on, sir knight, tell what he is and where; For here I vow upon my blazing badge, 230 Never to blaze a day in quietness; But bread and water will I only eat, And the green herb and rock shall be my couch, Till I have quelled that man or beast or fiend That works such damage to all errant knights.
- HOST Not far from hence, near to a craggy cliff, At the north end of this distressed town, There doth stand a lowly house Ruggedly builded, and in it a cave 240 In which an ugly giant now doth won, Ycleped Barbaroso. In his hand He shakes a naked lance of purest steel, With sleeves turned up, and him before he wears A motley garment to preserve his clothes From blood of those knights which he massacres, And ladies gent. Without his door doth hang A copper basin on a prickant spear, At which no sooner gentle knights can knock But the shrill sound fierce Barbaroso hears, 250 And rushing forth, brings in the errant knight, And sets him down in an enchanted chair. Then with an engine which he hath prepared, With forty teeth, he claws his courtly crown; Next makes him wink, and underneath his chin He plants a brazen pece of mighty bord, And knocks his bullets round about his cheeks, Whilst with his fingers, and an instrument With which he snaps his hair off, he doth fill The wretch's ears with a most hideous noise. 260 Thus every knight adventurer he doth trim, And now no creature dares encounter him.
- RAFE In God's name, I will fight with him. Kind sir, Go but before me to this dismal cave There this huge giant Barbaroso dwells, And, by that virtue that brave Rosicleer That damned brood of ugly giants slew,
- 
- 240 ugly: fearsome  
241 Ycleped: called, named (archaic)  
Barbaroso: a) barbarian; b) barber  
242 lance: i.e. razor  
245 which he massacres: i.e. whose hair he cuts  
246 gent: fair  
247 A copper . . . prickant spear: the traditional sign of a barber-surgeon: an upright ('prickant') pole of red and white that, together with the basin, signified that a barber could also draw teeth and let blood  
248 can: do  
252 engine: comb  
253 crown: head  
254 wink: cleanse his eyes (see III.i.394)  
255 pece: cup  
bord: rim  
256 bullets: small balls of soap  
258-9 snaps his . . . hideous noise: refers to the much-satirised long hair of gallants: see, for example Francis Beaumont's *The Woman Hater, or The Hungry Courtier* (1606)  
260 trim: can also mean thrash or trounce  
266 That damned brood of ugly giants slew: reference to Rosicleer's adventure with the giant Brandagedeon and his thirty knights in *The Mirror of Knighthood*, I.xxxvi

And Palmerin Frannarco overthrew,  
I doubt not but to curb this traitor foul  
And to the devil send his guilty soul.  
HOST Brave sprighted knight, thus far I will perform  
This your request: I'll bring you within sight 271  
Of this most loathsome place, inhabited  
By a more loathsome man; but dare not stay,  
For his main force swoops all he sees away.  
RAFE Saint George, set on before! March, squire and  
page. *Exeunt*  
WIFE George, dost think Rafe will confound the giant?  
CITIZEN I hold my cap to a farthing he does. Why,  
Nell, I saw him wrestle with the great Dutchman and  
hurl him. 280  
WIFE Faith, and that Dutchman was a goodly man, if  
all things were answerable to his bigness; and yet they  
say there was a Scotchman higher than he, and that  
they two and a knight met and saw one another for  
nothing; but of all the sights that ever were in  
London since I was married, methinks the little child  
that was so fair grown about the members was the  
prettiest, that and the hermaphrodite.  
CITIZEN Nay, by your leave, Nell, Ninivie was better.  
WIFE Ninivie? Oh, that was the story of Joan and the  
wall, was it not, George? 291  
CITIZEN Yes, lamb.

*Enter* MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

WIFE Look, George, here comes Mistress  
Merrythought again, and I would have Rafe come  
and fight with the giant. I tell you true, I long to  
see't.  
CITIZEN Good Mistress Merrythought, begone, I pray  
you, for my sake. I pray you, forbear a little; you shall  
have audience presently; I have a little business. 299  
WIFE Mistress Merrythought, if it please you to refrain  
your passion a little till Rafe have dispatched the  
giant out of the way, we shall think ourselves much  
bound to you. I thank you, good Mistress  
Merrythought. *Exit* MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT

267 Frannarco: the giant slain by Palmerin in *Palmerin d'Olivia*, I.li  
274 main: full  
275 Saint George, set on before!: battle cry invoking the patron saint of England  
278 hold: pledge  
279 the great Dutchman: possibly a reference to a famous German fencer who lived in early seventeenth-century London; 'Dutchman' was a term for speakers of both Dutch and German  
288 hermaphrodite: the citizens' taste for 'freaks' is referred to in *Epicœne* and was satirised in a number of plays, for example, Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610), V.i.21ff  
289 Ninivie: a contemporary puppet play about Jonah and the whale

*Enter a* BOY

CITIZEN Boy, come hither; send away Rafe and this  
whoreson giant quickly.  
BOY In good faith, sir, we cannot. You'll utterly spoil  
our play, and make it to be hissed, and it cost money;  
you will not suffer us to go on with our plot.—I pray,  
gentlemen, rule him. 310  
CITIZEN Let him come now and dispatch this, and I'll  
trouble you no more.  
BOY Will you give me your hand of that?  
WIFE Give him thy hand, George, do, and I'll kiss him.  
I warrant thee the youth means plainly.  
BOY I'll send him to you presently. *Exit* BOY  
WIFE I thank you, little youth.—Faith, the child hath a  
sweet breath, George, but I think it be troubled with  
the worms. *Carduus benedictus* and mare's milk were  
the only thing in the world for't. Oh, Rafe's here,  
George.—God send thee good luck, Rafe. 321

*Enter* RAFE, HOST, TIM as SQUIRE, and GEORGE as  
DWARF

HOST Puissant knight, yonder his mansion is;  
Lo, where the spear and copper basin are;  
Behold that string on which hangs many a tooth  
Drawn from the gentle jaw of wandering knights.  
I dare not stay to sound; he will appear. *Exit* HOST  
RAFE Oh, faint not, heart. Susan, my lady dear,  
The cobbler's maid in Milk Street, for whose sake  
I take these arms, oh let the thought of thee  
Carry thy knight through all adventurous deeds, 330  
And in the honour of thy beauteous self  
May I destroy this monster Barbaroso.—  
Knock, squire, upon the basin till it break  
With the shrill strokes, or till the giant speak.

*Enter* BARBER

WIFE Oh, George, the giant, the giant!—Now, Rafe,  
for thy life.  
BARBER What fond unknowing wight is this that dares  
So rudely knock at Barbaroso's cell,  
Where no man comes but leaves his fleece behind?  
RAFE I, traitorous caitiff, who am sent by fate 340  
To punish all the sad enormities

315 plainly: honestly  
319 *Carduus benedictus*: the blessed thistle (used as a medicinal cure-all)  
mare's milk: considered a good purgative  
326 sound: blow a horn  
328 Milk Street: between Cheapside and Gresham Street, originally London's milk market  
337 fond: foolish  
wight: man (archaic)  
339 fleece: a) beard; b) money (as in to 'fleece' someone)  
340 caitiff: wretch

Thou hast committed against ladies gent  
 And errant knights. Traitor to God and men,  
 Prepare thyself; this is the dismal hour  
 Appointed for thee to give strict account  
 Of all thy beastly treacherous villainies.

BARBER Foolhardy knight, full soon thou shalt aby  
*He takes down his pole*  
 This fond reproach: thy body will I bang,  
 And, lo, upon that string thy teeth shall hang.  
 Prepare thyself, for dead soon shalt thou be. 350

RAFE Saint George for me!  
 BARBER Gargantua for me! *They fight*  
 WIFE To him, Rafe, to him! Hold up the giant; set out  
 thy leg before, Rafe.  
 CITIZEN Falsify a blow, Rafe; falsify a blow; the giant  
 lies open on the left side.  
 WIFE Bear't off; bear't off still. There, boy.—Oh,  
 Rafe's almost down, Rafe's almost down.  
 RAFE Susan, inspire me.—Now have up again.  
 WIFE Up, up, up, up, up! So, Rafe, down with him,  
 down with him, Rafe. 361

CITIZEN Fetch him o'er the hip, boy.  
 WIFE There, boy; kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Rafe.  
 CITIZEN No, Rafe, get all out of him first.  
*RAFE knocks the BARBER down*  
 RAFE Presumptuous man, see to what desperate end  
 Thy treachery hath brought thee. The just gods,  
 Who never prosper those that do despise them,  
 For all the villainies which thou hast done  
 To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home  
 By my stiff arm, a knight adventurous. 370  
 But say, vile wretch, before I send thy soul  
 To sad Avernus, whither it must go,  
 What captives hold'st thou in thy sable cave?  
 BARBER Go in and free them all; thou hast the day.  
 RAFE Go, squire and dwarf, search in this dreadful  
 cave,  
 And free the wretched prisoners from their bonds.  
*Exeunt TIM as SQUIRE and GEORGE as DWARF*  
 BARBER I crave for mercy, as thou art a knight,  
 And scorn'st to spill the blood of those that beg.  
 RAFE Thou show'd'st no mercy, nor shalt thou have any;  
 Prepare thyself, for thou shalt surely die. 380

347 aby: pay for  
 349 string thy teeth shall hang: barbers hung strings of  
 extracted teeth outside their premises  
 352 Gargantua: folktale hero (rather than the giant from  
 Rabelais whose work had not been translated at this  
 time)  
 355 falsify: feign  
 369 paid thee home: fully punished  
 372 Avernus: a deep lake near Naples believed to be an  
 entrance to the underworld  
 373 sable: black  
 374 day: victory

*Enter TIM as SQUIRE leading one winking, with a basin  
 under his chin*

TIM Behold, brave knight, here is one prisoner  
 Whom this wild man hath used as you see.  
 WIFE This is the first wise word I heard the squire  
 speak.  
 RAFE Speak what thou art, and how thou hast been  
 used,  
 That I may give him condign punishment.  
 I KNIGHT I am a knight that took my journey post  
 Northward from London, and in courteous wise  
 This giant trained me to his loathsome den  
 Under pretence of killing of the itch; 390  
 And all my body with a powder strewed,  
 That smarts and stings, and cut away my beard  
 And my curled locks wherein were ribbons tied,  
 And with a water washed my tender eyes  
 (Whilst up and down about me still he skipped),  
 Whose virtue is, that till mine eyes be wiped  
 With a dry cloth, for this my foul disgrace  
 I shall not dare to look a dog i'th' face.  
 WIFE Alas, poor knight.—Relieve him, Rafe; relieve  
 poor knights whilst you live. 400  
 RAFE My trusty squire, convey him to the town,  
 Where he may find relief.—Adieu, fair knight.  
*Exit KNIGHT with TIM, who presently re-enters*  
*Enter GEORGE as DWARF leading one with a patch o'er his  
 nose*  
 GEORGE Puissant Knight of the Burning Pestle hight,  
 See here another wretch, whom this foul beast  
 Hath scorched and scored in this inhuman wise.  
 RAFE Speak me thy name and eke thy place of birth,  
 And what hath been thy usage in this cave.  
 2 KNIGHT I am a knight, Sir Pockhole is my name,  
 And by my birth I am a Londoner,  
 Free by my copy; but my ancestors 410  
 Were Frenchmen all; and riding hard this way  
 Upon a trotting horse, my bones did ache;  
 And I, faint knight, to ease my weary limbs,

SD *winking*: with his eyes shut  
 386 condign: suitable  
 387 post: in haste  
 389 trained: lured  
 390 itch: a symptom of venereal disease  
 393 ribbons: fashionable adornment for foppish knights  
 SD *patch o'er his nose*: sign of suffering from an advanced case  
 of syphilis  
 405 scorched: slashed (with a knife)  
 scored: cut  
 406 eke: also (archaic)  
 410 copy: certificate of admission to the freedom of the City  
 411 Frenchman: therefore associated with syphilis, 'the  
 French disease'  
 412 my bones did ache: symptom of advanced syphilis

Light at this cave, when straight this furious fiend,  
 With sharpest instrument of purest steel  
 Did cut the gristle of my nose away,  
 And in the place this velvet plaster stands.  
 Relieve me, gentle knight, out of his hands.

WIFE Good Rafe, relieve Sir Pockhole and send him  
 away, for, in truth, his breath stinks. 420

RAFE Convey him straight after the other knight.—  
 Sir Pockhole fare you well.

2 KNIGHT Kind sir, goodnight.  
*Exeunt KNIGHT with GEORGE, who then re-enters.*  
*Cries within*

3 KNIGHT (*within*) Deliver us.  
 WOMAN (*within*) Deliver us.

WIFE Hark, George, what a woeful cry there is. I think  
 some woman lies in there.

3 KNIGHT (*within*) Deliver us.  
 WOMAN (*within*) Deliver us.

RAFE What ghastly noise is this? Speak, Barbaroso,  
 Or by this blazing steel thy head goes off. 430

BARBER Prisoners of mine, whom I in diet keep.  
 Send lower down into the cave,  
 And in a tub that's heated smoking hot,  
 There may they find them and deliver them.

RAFE Run, squire and dwarf, deliver them with speed.  
*Exeunt TIM as SQUIRE and GEORGE as DWARF*

WIFE But will not Rafe kill this giant? Surely I am  
 afeared if he let him go he will do as much hurt as  
 ever he did.

CITIZEN Not so, mouse, neither, if he could convert  
 him. 440

WIFE Ay, George, if he could convert him; but a giant  
 is not so soon converted as one of us ordinary people.  
 There's a pretty tale of a witch that had the devil's  
 mark about her, God bless us, that had a giant to her  
 son, that was called Lob-lie-by-the-fire; didst never  
 hear it, George?

*Enter TIM as SQUIRE leading a man with a glass of lotion  
 in his hand, and GEORGE as the DWARF leading a woman  
 with diet-bread and drink*

417 velvet plaster: covering for both the scars of war and  
 those produced by the incisions made as a treatment for  
 syphilis

420 breath stinks: as a result of taking mercury, used in the  
 treatment of syphilis

423 Deliver us: parody of the Litany for General Supplication  
 in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1549, revised 1552 and 1559)

433 tub: sweating tubs were believed to cure venereal disease

439 convert: converting 'heathens' was a common element in  
 chivalric romance

443-4 devil's mark: the marks (spots or tooth marks) believed  
 to identify witches

SD *diet-bread*: special bread used in the treatment of  
 syphilis

CITIZEN Peace, Nell, here comes the prisoners.  
 GEORGE Here be these pinèd wretches, manful knight,  
 That for these six weeks have not seen a wight.

RAFE Deliver what you are, and how you came 450  
 To this sad cave, and what your usage was.

3 KNIGHT I am an errant knight that followed arms  
 With spear and shield, and in my tender years  
 I stricken was with Cupid's fiery shaft,  
 And fell in love with this my lady dear,  
 And stole her from her friends in Turnbull Street,  
 And bore her up and down from town to town  
 Where we did eat and drink and music hear,  
 Till at the length, at this unhappy town  
 We did arrive, and coming to this cave, 460  
 This beast us caught and put us in a tub  
 Where we this two months sweat, and should have  
 done  
 Another month if you had not relieved us.

WOMAN This bread and water hath our diet been,  
 Together with a rib cut from a neck  
 Of burnèd mutton; hard hath been our fare.  
 Release us from this ugly giant's snare.

3 KNIGHT This hath been all the food we have received  
 But only twice a day, for novelty,  
 He gave a spoonful of this hearty broth 470  
*Pulls out a syringe*

To each of us, through this same slender quill.

RAFE From this infernal monster you shall go,  
 That useth knights and gentle ladies so.—  
 Convey them hence.  
*Exeunt 3 KNIGHT and WOMAN with TIM and GEORGE  
 who presently re-enter*

CITIZEN Cony, I can tell thee the gentlemen like Rafe.  
 WIFE Ay, George, I see it well enough.—Gentlemen, I  
 thank you all heartily for gracing my man Rafe, and I  
 promise you you shall see him oft'ner.

BARBER Mercy, great knight, I do recant my ill,  
 And henceforth never gentle blood will spill. 480

RAFE I give thee mercy; but yet shalt thou swear  
 Upon my burning pestle to perform  
 Thy promise uttered.

BARBER I swear and kiss. *Kisses pestle*  
 RAFE Depart then, and amend.—  
*Exit BARBER*

Come, squire and dwarf, the sun grows towards his  
 set,  
 And we have many more adventures yet. *Exeunt*

448 pinèd: wasted, starved  
 450 Deliver: state  
 456 Turnbull Street: originally Turnmill Street, running  
 south from Clerkenwell Green and known for its  
 prostitutes  
 465 rib cut from a neck: extremely poor quality meat  
 466 mutton: prostitute (slang)  
 470 hearty: nourishing

CITIZEN Now Rafe is in this humour, I know he would ha' beaten all the boys in the house if they had been set on him. 489

WIFE Ay, George, but it is well as it is; I warrant you the gentlemen do consider what it is to overthrow a giant. But look, George, here comes Mistress Merrythought and her son Michael.—Now you are welcome, Mistress Merrythought, now Rafe has done, you may go on.

*Enter* MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT *and* MICHAEL

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Mick, my boy.

MICHAEL Ay, forsooth, mother. 497

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Be merry, Mick; we are at home now, where, I warrant you, you shall find the house flung out at the windows. (*Music within*) Hark, hey dogs, hey; this is the old world, i'faith, with my husband. If I get in among 'em, I'll play 'em such a lesson that they shall have little list to come scraping hither again.—Why, Master Merrythought, husband, Charles Merrythought.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*)  
(*Sings*) *If you will sing and dance and laugh,  
And hollo and laugh again,  
And then cry, 'There, boys, there', why then  
One, two, three, and four,  
We shall be merry within this hour.* 510

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Why, Charles, do you not know your own natural wife? I say, open the door, and turn me out those mangy companions; 'tis more than time that they were fellow and fellow-like with you. You are a gentleman, Charles, and an old man, and father of two children; and I myself (though I say it) by my mother's side niece to a worshipful gentleman, and a conductor; he has been three times in his majesty's service at Chester, and is now the fourth time, God bless him and his charge, upon his journey. 521

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*)  
(*Sings*) *Go from my window, love, go;*

487 humour: mood

500 house flung . . . the windows: signs of riotous living (proverbial)

501 world: behaviour, habit

503 list: desire  
scraping: playing (the fiddle)

507 *hollo*: shout

517 worshipful: honourable

518 conductor: captain

519 Chester: Cheshire port of embarkation for Ireland with a reputation for military corruption

522–6 and 543–7: *Go from . . . lodged here*: popular song that appears in a number of contemporary plays, including John Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* (1610–16), III.iii and *The Woman's Prize* (c. 1604), I.iii

*Go from my window, my dear;  
The wind and the rain  
Will drive you back again;  
You cannot be lodged here.* 526

Hark you, Mistress Merrythought, you that walk upon adventures and forsake your husband because he sings with never a penny in his purse; what, shall I think myself the worse? Faith, no, I'll be merry. You come out here—here's none but lads of mettle, lives of a hundred years and upwards; care never drunk their bloods, nor want made 'em warble, (*Sings*)

*Heigh-ho, my heart is heavy.* 534  
MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Why, Master Merrythought, what am I that you should laugh me to scorn thus abruptly? Am I not your fellow-feeler, as we may say, in all our miseries, your comforter in health and sickness? Have I not brought you children? Are they not like you, Charles? Look upon thine own image, hard-hearted man. And yet for all this— 542

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*)  
(*Sings*) *Begone, begone, my Juggy, my puggy,  
Begone, my love, my dear.  
The weather is warm  
'Twill do thee no harm  
Thou canst not be lodged here.*

—Be merry, boys; some light music, and more wine.

WIFE He's not in earnest, I hope, George, is he?

CITIZEN What if he be, sweetheart? 550

WIFE Marry, if he be, George, I'll make bold to tell him he's an ingrant old man to use his bed-fellow so scurvily.

CITIZEN What, how does he use her, honey?

WIFE Marry come up, Sir Saucebox, I think you'll take his part, will you not? Lord, how hot you are grown. You are a fine man, an' you had a fine dog; it becomes you sweetly.

CITIZEN Nay, prithee, Nell, chide not. For as I am an honest man and a true Christian grocer, I do not like his doings. 561

WIFE I cry you mercy then, George. You know we are all frail and full of infirmities.—D'ee hear, Master Merrythought, may I crave a word with you?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*)

Strike up lively, lads.

WIFE I had not thought, in truth, Master

531 mettle: courage

531–2 lives of . . . and upwards: their merry lives have kept them young

543 *Juggy*: diminutive of Joan  
*puggy*: term of endearment

551 Marry: indeed

552 ingrant: ignorant

555 Marry come up: 'now, now' (a taunt)

562 cry you mercy: beg your pardon

Merrythought, that a man of your age and discretion, as I may say, being a gentleman, and therefore known by your gentle conditions, could have used so little respect to the weakness of his wife. For your wife is your own flesh, the staff of your age, your yoke-fellow, with whose help you draw through the mire of this transitory world. Nay, she's your own rib. And again—

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*) 574  
 (Sings) *I come not hither for thee to teach,  
 I have no pulpit for thee to preach,  
 I would thou hadst kissed me under the breech,  
 As thou art a lady gay.*

WIFE Marry, with a vengeance! I am heartily sorry for the poor gentlewoman.—But if I were thy wife, i'faith, grey-beard, i'faith— 581

CITIZEN I prithee, sweet honeysuckle, be content.

WIFE Give me such words that am a gentlewoman born! Hang him, hoary rascal! Get me some drink, George, I am almost molten with fretting: now beshrew his knave's heart for it. *Exit Citizen*

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*) Play me a light lavolta. Come, be frolic. Fill the good fellows' wine.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Why, Master Merrythought, are you disposed to make me wait here? You'll open, I hope; I'll fetch them that shall open else. 592

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT (*at window*) Good woman, if you will sing I'll give you something; if not—  
 SONG  
*You are no love for me, Marg'ret,  
 I am no love for you. Leaves window*

(*within*) Come aloft, boys, aloft. 597  
 MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Now a churl's fart in your teeth, sir.—Come, Mick, we'll not trouble him; 'a shall not ding us i'th' teeth with his bread and his broth, that he shall not. Come, boy; I'll provide for thee, I warrant thee. We'll go to Master Venturewell's, the merchant; I'll get his letter to mine host of the Bell in Waltham; there I'll place thee with the tapster. Will not that do well for thee, Mick? And let me alone for that old cuckoldly knave your

father; I'll use him in his kind, I warrant ye.

*Exeunt*

FINIS ACTUS TERTII

## Interlude III

*Music. Enter BOY and CITIZEN*

WIFE Come, George, where's the beer?

CITIZEN Here, love.

WIFE This old fornicating fellow will not out of my mind yet.—Gentlemen, I'll begin to you all, and I desire more of your acquaintance, with all my heart. (*Drinks*) Fill the gentlemen some beer, George. (*BOY danceth*) Look, George, the little boy's come again; methinks he looks something like the Prince of Orange in his long stocking, if he had a little harness about his neck. George, I will have him dance 'Fading'.—'Fading' is a fine jig, I'll assure you, gentlemen.—Begin, brother.—Now 'a capers, sweetheart.—Now a turn o'th' toe, and then tumble. Cannot you tumble, youth? 14

BOY No, indeed, forsooth.

WIFE Nor eat fire?

BOY Neither.

WIFE Why then, I thank you heartily. There's twopence to buy you points withal.

*Exit BOY*

## Act IV

*Enter JASPER and BOY*

JASPER (*gives a letter*) There, boy, deliver this, but do it well.

Hast thou provided me four lusty fellows  
 Able to carry me? And art thou perfect  
 In all thy business?

BOY Sir, you need not fear:  
 I have my lesson here and cannot miss it.  
 The men are ready for you, and what else  
 Pertains to this employment.

JASPER (*gives him money*) There, my boy;

569 conditions: qualities

571–2 yoke-fellow: companion (from ploughing)

587 lavolta: lively dance for couples

588 frolic: merry

595–6 *You are . . . for you*: possibly from a ballad about Fair Margaret and Sweet William (see II.427–30). Printed as part of the song in Q1–3

597 Come aloft: 'the expression is generally found applied to apes that were taught to vault: here it is used merely as an incitement to mirth' (Dyce)

600 ding: strike, i.e. taunt

606 cuckoldly: adulterous

607 in his kind: according to his nature

4 begin to: toast

8–9 Prince of Orange: Prince Maurice of Nassau, whose picture (in his 'long stocking') was widely known

9 harness: armour

11 Fading: a) an Irish dance; b) sexual orgasm

12 capers: lively dancing

13 tumble: somersault (with sexual connotation)

19 points: laces for tying hose to doublet

2 lusty: vigorous

3 perfect: instructed (as in 'perfected')

Take it, but buy no land.  
 BOY Faith, sir, 'twere rare  
 To see so young a purchaser. I fly,  
 And on my wings carry your destiny. *Exit*  
 JASPER Go, and be happy.—Now, my latest hope, 11  
 Forsake me not, but fling thy anchor out  
 And let it hold. Stand fixed, thou rolling stone,  
 Till I enjoy my dearest. Hear me, all  
 You powers that rule in men celestial. *Exit*  
 WIFE Go thy ways; thou art as crooked a sprig as ever  
 grew in London. I warrant him, he'll come to some  
 naughty end or other, for his looks say no less.  
 Beside, his father (you know, George) is none of the  
 best; you heard him take me up like a flirt-gill, and  
 sing bawdy songs upon me; but, i'faith, if I live,  
 George— 22  
 CITIZEN Let me alone, sweetheart—I have a trick in  
 my head shall lodge him in the Arches for one year,  
 and make him sing *peccavi* ere I leave him, and yet he  
 shall never know who hurt him neither.

WIFE Do, my good George, do.

*Enter* BOY

CITIZEN What shall we have Rafe do now, boy?  
 BOY You shall have what you will, sir.  
 CITIZEN Why, so, sir; go and fetch me him then, and  
 let the Sophy of Persia come and christen him a  
 child. 32  
 BOY Believe me, sir, that will not do so well. 'Tis stale;  
 it has been had before at the Red Bull.  
 WIFE George, let Rafe travel over great hills, and let  
 him be very weary, and come to the King of

8 buy no land: from 'he that buys land buys many stones'  
 (proverbial)  
 11–12 my latest . . . anchor out: anchors often appeared in  
 emblems associated with hope  
 13 rolling stone: a) the earth; b) metaphor for uncertain  
 fortune  
 15 powers that . . . men celestial: reference to the Neo-  
 Platonic figure Venus Coelestis (Heavenly Love) who  
 possesses the minds of those whose intellects pass beyond  
 the sensible to the heavenly  
 16 sprig: youth  
 18 naughty: mischievous  
 20 flirt-gill: promiscuous woman (slang)  
 24 Arches: St Mary de Arcubus, a church in Cheapside  
 where the Ecclesiastical Court of Appeal for the Province  
 of Canterbury sat to hear cases of abuse of church law  
 25 *peccavi*: 'I have sinned'  
 31–2 Sophy of . . . a child: reference to the Sophy of Persia,  
 godfather to Robert Sherley's child in *The Travels of the*  
*Three English Brothers* (c. 1607) by John Day, William  
 Rowley and George Wilkins  
 34 the Red Bull: a popular theatre in Clerkenwell, but also  
 known for presenting bombastic ('stale') plays of little  
 consequence

Cracovia's house, covered with black velvet, and there  
 let the king's daughter stand in her window all in  
 beaten gold, combing her golden locks with a comb  
 of ivory, and let her spy Rafe, and fall in love with  
 him, and come down to him, and carry him into her  
 father's house, and then let Rafe talk with her. 42  
 CITIZEN Well said, Nell, it shall be so.—Boy, let's ha't  
 done quickly.

BOY Sir, if you will imagine all this to be done already,  
 you shall hear them talk together. But we cannot  
 present a house covered with black velvet, and a lady  
 in beaten gold.

CITIZEN Sir boy, let's ha't as you can, then.  
 BOY Besides, it will show ill-favouredly to have a  
 grocer's prentice to court a king's daughter. 51

CITIZEN Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories! I  
 pray you, what was Sir Dagonet? Was not he prentice  
 to a grocer in London? Read the play of *The Four*  
*Prentices of London*, where they toss their pikes so. I  
 pray you, fetch him in, sir, fetch him in.

BOY It shall be done.—It is not our fault, gentlemen. *Exit*

WIFE Now we shall see fine doings, I warrant'ee,  
 George. Oh, here they come; how prettily the King  
 of Cracovia's daughter is dressed. 60

*Enter* RAFE and the LADY POMPIONA, TIM as SQUIRE and  
 GEORGE as DWARF

CITIZEN Ay, Nell, it is the fashion of that country, I  
 warrant'ee.

LADY Welcome, sir knight, unto my father's court,  
 King of Moldavia; unto me, Pompiona,  
 His daughter dear. But sure you do not like  
 Your entertainment, that will stay with us  
 No longer but a night.

RAFE Damsel right fair,  
 I am on many sad adventures bound,  
 That call me forth into the wilderness;  
 Besides, my horse's back is something galled, 70

37 Cracovia: Cracow, capital of Poland (until 1609)  
 black: eds (omitted from Q<sub>1</sub>)  
 39 beaten gold: an example of the elaborate costumes used  
 for entertainments presented at court, such as Ben  
 Jonson's *The Masque of Blackness* (1605)  
 53 Sir Dagonet: King Arthur's fool but possibly known to  
 early seventeenth-century audiences from 'Arthur's  
 Show', an exhibition of archery held at Mile End; see  
 2 *Henry IV*, III.ii.257  
 54–5 *The Four Prentices of London*: in Heywood's play Eustace  
 and Guy toss and catch their pikes to show their  
 readiness for war  
 64 Moldavia: a Danubian province (now in Romania); the  
 Prince of Moldavia was with a Turkish delegation to the  
 English court in November 1607  
 70 galled: sore

Which will enforce me ride a sober pace.  
 But many thanks, fair lady, be to you,  
 For using errant knight with courtesy.  
 LADY But say, brave knight, what is your name and  
 birth?  
 RAFE My name is Rafe; I am an Englishman,  
 As true as steel, a hearty Englishman,  
 And prentice to a grocer in the Strand  
 By deed indent, of which I have one part.  
 But Fortune calling me to follow arms,  
 On me this holy order I did take  
 Of Burning Pestle, which in all men's eyes  
 I bear, confounding ladies' enemies.  
 LADY Oft have I heard of your brave countrymen,  
 And fertile soil and store of wholesome food;  
 My father oft will tell me of a drink  
 In England found, and 'nipitato' called,  
 Which driveth all the sorrow from your hearts.  
 RAFE Lady, 'tis true, you need not lay your lips  
 To better nipitato than there is.  
 LADY And of a wild fowl he will often speak  
 Which 'powdered beef and mustard' callèd is.  
 For there have been great wars 'twixt us and you;  
 But truly, Rafe, it was not long of me.  
 Tell me then, Rafe, could you contented be  
 To wear a lady's favour in your shield?  
 RAFE I am a knight of religious order,  
 And will not wear a favour of a lady's  
 That trusts in Antichrist and false traditions.  
 CITIZEN Well said, Rafe, convert her if thou canst.  
 RAFE Besides, I have a lady of my own  
 In merry England, for whose virtuous sake  
 I took these arms, and Susan is her name,  
 A cobbler's maid in Milk Street, whom I vow  
 Ne'er to forsake whilst life and pestle last.  
 LADY Happy that cobbling dame, whoe'er she be,  
 That for her own, dear Rafe, hath gotten thee;  
 Unhappy I, that ne'er shall see the day  
 To see thee more, that bear'st my heart away.  
 RAFE Lady, farewell; I needs must take my leave.  
 LADY Hard-hearted Rafe, that ladies dost deceive.  
 CITIZEN Hark thee, Rafe, there's money for thee; give  
 something in the King of Cracovia's house; be not  
 beholding to him.  
 RAFE Lady, before I go, I must remember

77 Strand Q2 (strond Q1)  
 78 deed indent: duplicate agreement of indenture between  
 apprentice and master; the deed was torn irregularly  
 ('indented') so that it could be proved genuine if the two  
 parts matched  
 82 confounding: a) confusing, bewildering; b) defeating  
 86 'nipitato': prime ale  
 91 powdered: salted  
 93 long: on account  
 105 cobbling: could also mean 'bungling'

Your father's officers, who, truth to tell,  
 Have been about me very diligent.  
 Hold up thy snowy hand, thou princely maid:  
 There's twelve pence for your father's chamberlain;  
 And another shilling for his cook,  
 For, by my troth, the goose was roasted well; 120  
 And twelve pence for your father's horse-keeper,  
 For 'nointing my horse back—and for his butter,  
 There is another shilling—to the maid  
 That washed my boot-hose, there's an English groat:  
 And twopence to the boy that wiped my boots;  
 And last, fair lady, there is for yourself  
 Threepence, to buy you pins at Bumbo Fair.  
 LADY Full many thanks; and I will keep them safe  
 Till all the heads be off, for thy sake, Rafe.  
 RAFE Advance, my squire and dwarf; I cannot stay. 130  
 LADY Thou kill'st my heart in parting thus away.  
*Exeunt*  
 WIFE I commend Rafe yet that he will not stoop to a  
 Cracovian. There's properer women in London than  
 any are there, iwis. But here comes Master  
 Humphrey and his love again now, George.  
 CITIZEN Ay, cony, peace.  
*Enter MERCHANT, HUMPHREY, LUCE, and BOY. LUCE  
 kneels*  
 MERCHANT Go, get you up; I will not be entreated.  
 And, gossip mine, I'll keep you sure hereafter  
 From gadding out again with boys and unthrifts.  
 Come, they are women's tears; I know your  
 fashion.— 140  
 Go, sirrah, lock her in, and keep the key  
 Safe as you love your life. *Exeunt LUCE and BOY*  
 Now, my son Humphrey,  
 You may both rest assured of my love  
 In this, and reap your own desire.  
 HUMPHREY I see this love you speak of, through your  
 daughter,  
 Although the hole be little; and hereafter  
 Will yield the like in all I may, or can,  
 Fitting a Christian, and a gentleman.  
 MERCHANT I do believe you, my good son, and thank  
 you:

124 boot-hose: elaborately embroidered footless stockings  
 which covered the calf  
 125 boots: the footwear of gallants and would-be gentlemen  
 127 pins: elaborate pins were a fashionable gift  
 Bumbo Fair: probably from a drink sold at fairs (made  
 from rum, water, sugar and nutmeg)  
 132 stoop: submit  
 133 properer: handsomer  
 137 up: either from kneeling or to her chamber  
 138 gossip: female friend  
 139 unthrifts: prodigals  
 140 women's tears: i.e. not to be taken seriously



For 'twere an impudence to think you flattered. 150  
 HUMPHREY It were indeed; but shall I tell you why?

I have been beaten twice about the lie.

MERCHANT Well, son, no more of compliment. My daughter

Is yours again; appoint the time, and take her;

We'll have no stealing for it. I myself

And some few of our friends will see you married.

HUMPHREY I would you would, i'faith, for, be it known,

I ever was afraid to lie alone.

MERCHANT Some three days hence, then.

HUMPHREY Three days? Let me see:

'Tis somewhat of the most; yet I agree 160

Because I mean against the appointed day

To visit all my friends in new array.

*Enter SERVANT*

SERVANT Sir, there's a gentlewoman without would speak with your worship.

MERCHANT What is she?

SERVANT Sir, I asked her not.

MERCHANT Bid her come in. *Exit SERVANT*

*Enter MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Peace be to your worship. I come as a poor suitor to you, sir, in the behalf of this child. 170

MERCHANT Are you not wife to Merrythought?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Yes, truly; would I had ne'er seen his eyes! He has undone me and himself and his children, and there he lives at home, and sings and hoits and revels among his drunken companions; but, I warrant you, where to get a penny to put bread in his mouth he knows not; and therefore, if it like your worship, I would entreat your letter to the honest host of the Bell in Waltham, that I may place my child under the protection of his tapster, in some settled course of life. 181

MERCHANT I'm glad the heavens have heard my prayers. Thy husband,

When I was ripe in sorrows, laughed at me;

Thy son, like an unthankful wretch, I having

Redeemed him from his fall and made him mine,

To show his love again, first stole my daughter,

Then wronged this gentleman, and, last of all,

Gave me that grief had almost brought me down

Unto my grave, had not a stronger hand

Relieved my sorrows. Go, and weep as I did, 190

And be unpitied; for I here profess

An everlasting hate to all thy name.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT Will you so, sir? How say you by that?—Come, Mick, let him keep his wind to cool his porridge. We'll go to thy nurse's, Mick; she knits silk stockings, boy, and we'll knit too, boy, and be beholding to none of them all.

*Exeunt MICHAEL and his MOTHER*

*Enter a BOY with a letter*

BOY Sir, I take it you are the master of this house.

MERCHANT How then, boy?

BOY Then to yourself, sir, comes this letter. 200

MERCHANT From whom, my pretty boy?

BOY From him that was your servant; but no more

Shall that name ever be, for he is dead:

Grief of your purchased anger broke his heart.

I saw him die, and from his hand received

This paper, with a charge to bring it hither;

Read it, and satisfy yourself in all. 207

MERCHANT (*reads letter*) 'Sir, that I have wronged your love, I must confess; in which I have purchased to myself, besides mine own undoing, the ill opinion of my friends. Let not your anger, good sir, outlive me, but suffer me to rest in peace with your forgiveness; let my body (if a dying man may so much prevail with you) be brought to your daughter, that she may truly know my hot flames are now buried, and, withal, receive a testimony of the zeal I bore her virtue. Farewell for ever, and be ever happy. Jasper.' God's hand is great in this. I do forgive him; Yet I am glad he's quiet, where I hope He will not bite again.—Boy, bring the body, 220 And let him have his will, if that be all.

BOY 'Tis here without, sir.

MERCHANT So, sir, if you please,

You may conduct it in; I do not fear it.

HUMPHREY I'll be your usher, boy, for though I say it, He owed me something once, and well did pay it.

*Exeunt*

*Enter LUCE alone*

LUCE If there be any punishment inflicted

Upon the miserable, more than yet I feel,

Let it together seize me, and at once

Press down my soul. I cannot bear the pain

Of these delaying tortures. Thou that art 230

The end of all, and the sweet rest of all,

Come, come, oh Death, bring me to thy peace,

And blot out all the memory I nourish

Both of my father and my cruel friend.

Oh wretched maid, still living to be wretched,

155 We'll have . . . for it: 'we'll not have another elopement'

160 of the most: overlong

161 against: in expectation of

175 hoits: laughs

204 purchased: incurred by his conduct

218 great: evident

224 usher: either a doorkeeper or an assistant

To be a say to Fortune in her changes,  
 And grow to number times and woes together!  
 How happy had I been, if, being born,  
 My grave had been my cradle.

Enter SERVANT

SERVANT By your leave,  
 Young mistress, here's a boy hath brought a coffin. 240  
 What 'a would say, I know not, but your father  
 Charged me to give you notice. Here they come.

Exit

Enter two (CARRIER and BOY) bearing a coffin,  
 JASPER in it

LUCE For me I hope 'tis come, and 'tis most welcome.

BOY Fair mistress, let me not add greater grief  
 To that great store you have already. Jasper,  
 That whilst he lived was yours, now dead  
 And here enclosed, commanded me to bring  
 His body hither, and to crave a tear  
 From those fair eyes, though he deserved not pity  
 To deck his funeral; for so he bid me 250  
 Tell her for whom he died.

LUCE He shall have many.—  
 Good friends, depart a little, whilst I take  
 My leave of this dead man that once I lov'd:

Exeunt COFFIN CARRIER and BOY

Hold yet a little, life, and then I give thee  
 To thy first heavenly being. Oh, my friend!  
 Hast thou deceived me thus, and got before me?  
 I shall not long be after. But, believe me,  
 Thou wert too cruel, Jasper, 'gainst thyself  
 In punishing the fault I could have pardoned,  
 With so untimely death. Thou didst not wrong me,  
 But ever wert most kind, most true, most loving; 261  
 And I the most unkind, most false, most cruel.  
 Didst thou but ask a tear? I'll give thee all,  
 Even all my eyes can pour down, all my sighs,  
 And all myself, before thou goest from me.  
 These are but sparing rites; but if thy soul  
 Be yet about this place, and can behold  
 And see what I prepare to deck thee with,  
 It shall go up, borne on the wings of peace,  
 And satisfied. First will I sing thy dirge,  
 Then kiss thy pale lips, and then die myself, 270  
 And fill one coffin and one grave together.

SONG

*Come you whose loves are dead,  
 And whiles I sing  
 Weep and wring  
 Every hand, and every head*

236 say: test, touchstone (from 'assay')

266 sparing: meagre

270 dirge: hymn for a funeral

*Bind with cypress and sad yew;  
 Ribands black and candles blue  
 For him that was of men most true.*

*Come with heavy moaning, 280  
 And on his grave  
 Let him have  
 Sacrifice of sighs and groaning;  
 Let him have fair flowers enow,  
 White and purple, green and yellow,  
 For him that was of men most true.*

Thou sable cloth, sad cover of my joys,  
 I lift thee up, and thus I meet with death.  
 JASPER (rising out of the coffin) And thus you meet the  
 living.

LUCE Save me, heaven!  
 JASPER Nay, do not fly me, fair; I am no spirit; 290  
 Look better on me; do you know me yet?

LUCE Oh, thou dear shadow of my friend.

JASPER Dear substance;  
 I swear I am no shadow; feel my hand,  
 It is the same it was. I am your Jasper.  
 Your Jasper that's yet living, and yet loving.  
 Pardon my rash attempt, my foolish proof  
 I put in practice of your constancy;  
 For sooner should my sword have drunk my blood  
 And set my soul at liberty, than drawn  
 The least drop from that body; for which boldness  
 Doom me to anything: if death, I take it, 301  
 And willingly.

LUCE This death I'll give you for it. Kisses him  
 So, now I am satisfied; you are no spirit,  
 But my own truest, truest, truest friend.  
 Why do you come thus to me?

JASPER First to see you,  
 Then to convey you hence.

LUCE It cannot be,  
 For I am locked up here and watched at all hours,  
 That 'tis impossible for me to 'scape.

JASPER Nothing more possible. Within this coffin  
 Do you convey yourself; let me alone, 310  
 I have the wits of twenty men about me.  
 Only I crave the shelter of your closet  
 A little, and then fear me not. Creep in,  
 That they may presently convey you hence.  
 Fear nothing, dearest love, I'll be your second.

277 cypress and sad yew: traditional emblems of mourning; see  
*Twelfth Night*, II.iv.50–65

278 blue: the colour of constancy

285 White and . . . and yellow: symbols of purity, sorrow, the  
 soul, and divinity respectively

292 shadow: shade, departed spirit

312 closet: private room

313 fear me not: 'do not have fear for me'

315 second: support

LUCE *lies down in the coffin, and JASPER covers her with the cloth*

Lie close, so; all goes well yet.—Boy.

*Enter* BOY *and* COFFIN CARRIER

BOY At hand, sir.

JASPER Convey away the coffin, and be wary.

BOY 'Tis done already.

JASPER Now must I go conjure. *Exit*

*Enter* MERCHANT

MERCHANT Boy, boy!

BOY Your servant, sir. 320

MERCHANT Do me this kindness, boy (hold, here's a crown): before thou bury the body of this fellow, carry it to his old merry father, and salute him from me, and bid him sing; he hath cause.

BOY I will, sir.

MERCHANT And then bring me word what tune he is in, and have another crown; but do it truly. I have fitted him a bargain now will vex him.

BOY God bless your worship's health, sir. 329

MERCHANT Farewell, boy. *Exeunt*

*Enter* MASTER MERRYTHOUGHT

WIFE Ah, old Merrythought, art thou there again?

Let's hear some of thy songs.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

*(Sings)* *Who can sing a merrier note  
Than he that cannot change a goat?*

Not a denier left, and yet my heart leaps. I do wonder yet, as old as I am, that any man will follow a trade, or serve, that may sing and laugh, and walk the streets. My wife and both my sons are I know not where; I have nothing left, nor know I how to come by meat to supper, yet am I merry still, for I know I shall find it upon the table at six o'clock. Therefore, hang thought. 342

*(Sings)* *I would not be a serving man  
To carry the cloak-bag still,  
Nor would I be a falconer  
The greedy hawks to fill;  
But I would be in a good house,  
And have a good master too,  
But I would eat and drink of the best,  
And no work would I do.* 350

This is it that keeps life and soul together: mirth. This is the philosopher's stone that they write so much on, that keeps a man ever young.

*Enter* a BOY

BOY Sir, they say they know all your money is gone, and they will trust you for no more drink.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Will they not? Let 'em choose. The best is, I have mirth at home, and need not send abroad for that; let them keep their drink to themselves.

*(Sings)* *For Jillian of Bury she dwells on a hill, 360  
And she bath good beer and ale to sell,  
And of good fellows she thinks no ill;  
And thither will we go now, now, now, now,  
And thither will we go now.  
And when you have made a little stay,  
You need not ask what is to pay,  
But kiss your hostess and go your way;  
And thither, etc.*

*Enter* another BOY

2 BOY Sir, I can get no bread for supper. 369

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Hang bread and supper! Let's preserve our mirth, and we shall never feel hunger, I'll warrant you. Let's have a catch; boy, follow me; come, sing this catch:

*(They sing)* *Ho, ho, nobody at home!  
Meat, nor drink, nor money ha' we none.  
Fill the pot, Eedy,  
Never more need I.*

So, boys, enough; follow me; let's change our place and we shall laugh afresh.

*Exeunt*

FINIS ACT IV

## Interlude IV

WIFE Let him go, George; 'a shall not have any countenance from us, nor a good word from any i'th' company, if I may strike stroke in't.

CITIZEN No more 'a sha'not, love; but, Nell, I will have Rafe do a very notable matter now, to the eternal honour and glory of all grocers.—Sirrah, you there, boy! Can none of you hear?

352 philosopher's stone: the stone which, in alchemy, heals wounds, turns base metals into gold, and prolongs life

372 catch: song sung as a round

373 sing this catch: these words are slightly separated from the preceding 'come' in Q1-2 and some eds present them as a stage direction

374-7 *Ho, ho . . . need I*: a catch from *Pammelia*

2 countenance: favour

3 strike stroke: have my say

316 close: hidden

318 conjure: perform the trick

326 tune: mood

328 fitted: furnished

333-4 *Who can . . . a goat?*: a catch from Ravenscroft's *Pammelia* (1606)

335 denier: French coin of very small value

342 hang: dismiss all

344 *cloak-bag*: portmanteau

Enter BOY

BOY Sir, your pleasure?

CITIZEN Let Rafe come out on May Day in the morning, and speak upon a conduit with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers and his rings and his knacks.

BOY Why, sir, you do not think of our plot. What will become of that, then? <sup>12</sup>

CITIZEN Why sir, I care not what become on't. I'll have him come out, or I'll fetch him out myself. I'll have something done in honour of the city. Besides, he hath been long enough upon adventures. Bring him out quickly, or, if I come in amongst you—

BOY Well, sir, he shall come out. But if our play miscarry, sir, you are like to pay for't. *Exit* BOY

CITIZEN Bring him away, then. <sup>22</sup>

WIFE This will be brave, i'faith; George, shall not he dance the morris too for the credit of the Strand?

CITIZEN No, sweetheart, it will be too much for the boy.

Enter RAFE

Oh, there he is, Nell; he's reasonable well in reparel, but he has not rings enough.

RAFE London, to thee I do present the merry month of May;

Let each true subject be content to hear me what I say: For from the top of conduit head, as plainly may appear, <sup>30</sup>

I will both tell my name to you and wherefore I came here.

My name is Rafe, by due descent though not ignoble I,

Yet far inferior to the flock of gracious grocery; And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,

With gilded staff and crossed scarf, the May Lord here I stand.

Rejoice, oh English hearts, rejoice; rejoice, oh lovers dear;

Rejoice, oh city, town, and country; rejoice eke every shire.

9 May Day: the festival of spring with festivities, speeches, dancing and song. A good account can be found in Philip Stubbes's *The Anatomy of Abuses* (1583), Ch. xiii

10 conduit: fountain, cistern

10–12 scarfs about . . . his knacks: the accoutrements of Morris dancing

28–63 London, to . . . I cease: written in lines of fourteen syllables as a parody of May Day speeches and, possibly, hymn books

32 My name . . . ignoble I: parodies the speech by the Ghost of Don Andrea in *The Spanish Tragedy*, I.i.5–7, by Thomas Kyd

35 gilded staff and crossed scarf: symbols of the May Lord's authority

For now the fragrant flowers do spring and sprout in seemly sort,

The little birds do sit and sing, the lambs do make fine sport.

And now the birchen tree doth bud, that makes the schoolboy cry; <sup>40</sup>

The morris rings while hobby-horse doth foot it feateously.

The lords and ladies now abroad for their disport and play,

Do kiss sometimes upon the grass, and sometimes in the hay.

Now butter with a leaf of sage is good to purge the blood;

Fly Venus and phlebotomy, for they are neither good. Now little fish on tender stone begin to cast their bellies,

And sluggish snails, that erst were mute, do creep out of their shellies.

The rumbling rivers now do warm for little boys to paddle,

The sturdy steed now goes to grass, and up they hang his saddle.

The heavy hart, the bellowing buck, the rascal, and the pricket, <sup>50</sup>

Are now among the yeoman's peas, and leave the fearful thicket.

And be like them, oh you, I say, of this same noble town,

And lift aloft your velvet heads, and, slipping off your gown,

With bells on legs and napkins clean unto your shoulders tied,

40 birchen tree: the branches of the birch were used for corporal punishment

41 hobby-horse: a wooden frame that allowed dancers to pretend to be horses. It became a principal focus of Puritan attacks on May Day celebrations because of the sexual symbolism of its rocking motion  
feateously: nimbly

44 butter: thought to take on medicinal properties during the spring

45 Venus and phlebotomy: sexual intercourse (here represented by the classical goddess of love) and blood-letting (phlebotomy) were both believed to weaken the body

46 cast their bellies: spawn

47 snails: believed to trace the lover's name in the ashes of a hearth  
erst: formerly

50 rascal: young or inferior deer in a herd

pricket: two-year-old buck

53 velvet heads: a) the new antlers of deer; b) the antlers of a new cuckold

54–5 bells on . . . and garters: more Morris dancer's accoutrements

With scarfs and garters as you please, and 'Hey for our town' cried,  
 March out, and show your willing minds, by twenty  
 and by twenty,  
 To Hogsdon or to Newington, where ale and cakes  
 are plenty.  
 And let it ne'er be said for shame, that we the youths  
 of London  
 Lay thrumming of our caps at home, and left our  
 custom undone.  
 Up then, I say, both young and old, both man and  
 maid a-maying, 60  
 With drums and guns that bounce aloud, and merry  
 tabor playing!  
 Which to prolong, God save our king, and send his  
 country peace,  
 And root out treason from the Land! And so, my  
 friends, I cease.

*Exit*

## Act V

*Enter MERCHANT, solus*

MERCHANT I will have no great store of company at the  
 wedding: a couple of neighbours and their wives; and  
 we will have a capon in stewed broth, with marrow,  
 and a good piece of beef, stuck with rosemary.

*Enter JASPER, his face mealed*

JASPER Forbear thy pains, fond man; it is too late.

MERCHANT Heaven bless me! Jasper?

JASPER Ay, I am his ghost,  
 Whom thou hast injured for his constant love,  
 Fond worldly wretch, who dost not understand  
 In death that true hearts cannot parted be.  
 First, know thy daughter is quite borne away 10  
 On wings of angels, through the liquid air,  
 To far out of thy reach, and never more  
 Shalt thou behold her face. But she and I  
 Will in another world enjoy our loves,  
 Where neither father's anger, poverty,  
 Nor any cross that troubles earthly men  
 Shall make us sever our united hearts.

57 Hogsdon or to Newington: places of resort and recreation

59 thrumming of our caps: decorating caps with tassels (a sign of wasting time)  
 custom: 'wenching'

61 tabor: small drum

3-4 capon . . . with rosemary: traditional seventeenth-century wedding fare

5D *mealed*: whitened with flour

5 pains: labours (in preparation)

16 cross: impediment

And never shalt thou sit, or be alone  
 In any place, but I will visit thee  
 With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind 20  
 The great offences which thou didst to me.  
 When thou art at thy table with thy friends,  
 Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,  
 I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,  
 Invisible to all men but thyself,  
 And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear  
 Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,  
 And stand as mute and pale as Death itself.

MERCHANT Forgive me, Jasper. Oh, what might I do,  
 Tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost? 30

JASPER There is no means; too late thou think'st of  
 this.

MERCHANT But tell me what were best for me to do?

JASPER Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father,  
 And beat fond Humphrey out of thy doors.

*Exit JASPER**Enter HUMPHREY*

WIFE Look, George, his very ghost would have folks  
 beaten.

HUMPHREY Father, my bride is gone, fair Mistress Luce;  
 My soul's the fount of vengeance, mischief's sluice.

MERCHANT Hence, fool, out of my sight with thy fond  
 passion!

Thou hast undone me. *Beats him*

HUMPHREY Hold, my father dear, 40

For Luce thy daughter's sake, that had no peer.

MERCHANT Thy father, fool? There's some blows  
 more, begone!

Jasper, I hope thy ghost be well appeased  
 To see thy will performed. Now will I go  
 To satisfy thy father for thy wrongs.

HUMPHREY What shall I do? I have been beaten twice  
 And Mistress Luce is gone. Help me, device!

Since my true love is gone, I never more  
 Whilst I do live, upon the sky will pore,  
 But in the dark will wear out my shoe soles 50

In passion in Saint Faith's Church under Paul's. *Exit*

WIFE George, call Rafe hither; if you love me, call Rafe  
 hither. I have the bravest thing for him to do,

George; prithee call him quickly.

CITIZEN Rafe, why Rafe, boy!

*Enter RAFE*

19-28 a parody of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606), III.iv.48-143

38 fount: source

39 passion: grief

47 device: contrivance

51 Saint Faith's . . . under Paul's: St Faith's was a parish church located in the crypt of St Paul's underneath the choir; gallants would parade in the aisle of the cathedral above

53 bravest: most splendid

RAFE Here, sir. 56  
 CITIZEN Come hither, Rafe; come to thy mistress, boy.  
 WIFE Rafe, I would have thee call all the youths together in battle-ray, with drums, and guns, and flags, and march to Mile End in pompous fashion, and there exhort your soldiers to be merry and wise, and to keep their beards from burning, Rafe; and then skirmish, and let your flags fly, and cry, 'Kill, kill, kill'. My husband shall lend you his jerkin, Rafe, and there's a scarf, for the rest, the house shall furnish you, and we'll pay for't. Do it bravely, Rafe, and think before whom you perform, and what person you represent. 68  
 RAFE I warrant you, mistress, if I do it not for the honour of the city and the credit of my master, let me never hope for freedom.  
 WIFE 'Tis well spoken, i'faith. Go thy ways; thou art a spark indeed.  
 CITIZEN Rafe, Rafe, double your files bravely, Rafe.  
 RAFE I warrant you, sir. *Exit* RAFE  
 CITIZEN Let him look narrowly to his service, I shall take him else. I was there myself a pikeman once in the hottest of the day, wench; had my feather shot sheer away, the fringe of my pike burnt off with powder, my pate broken with a scouring-stick, and yet I thank God I am here. *Drum within*  
 WIFE Hark, George, the drums. 82  
 CITIZEN Ran, tan, tan, ran, tan. Oh, wench, an thou hadst but seen little Ned of Aldgate, Drum-Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant, and then struck softly till the ward came up, and then thundered again, and together we go. 'Sa, sa, sa, bounce', quoth the guns; 'Courage, my hearts', quoth the captains, 'Saint George', quoth the pikemen; and withal here they lay, and there they lay. And yet for all this I am here, wench. 91  
 WIFE Be thankful for it, George, for indeed 'tis wonderful.

*Enter* RAFE and his company, with drums and colours

RAFE March fair, my hearts! Lieutenant, beat the rear up.—Ancient, let your colours fly; but have a great

care of the butchers' hooks at Whitechapel; they have been the death of many a fair ancient.—Open your files that I may take a view both of your persons and munition.—Sergeant, call a muster.

SERGEANT A stand!—William Hamerton, pewterer!  
 HAMERTON Here, captain. 101  
 RAFE A corslet and a Spanish pike; 'tis well. Can you shake it with a terror?  
 HAMERTON I hope so, captain.  
 RAFE Charge upon me. (HAMERTON *charges upon* RAFE)  
 'Tis with the weakest. Put more strength, William Hamerton, more strength. As you were again.—Proceed, Sergeant.  
 SERGEANT George Greengoose, poulterer!  
 GREENGOOSE Here. 111  
 RAFE Let me see your piece, neighbour Greengoose; when was she shot in?  
 GREENGOOSE An't like you, master captain, I made a shot even now, partly to scour her, and partly for audacity.  
 RAFE It should seem so certainly, for her breath is yet inflamed; besides, there is a main fault in the touch-hole, it runs and stinketh; and I tell you moreover, and believe it, ten such touch-holes would breed the pox in the army. Get you a feather, neighbour, get you a feather, sweet oil, and paper, and your piece may do well enough yet. Where's your powder? 122  
 GREENGOOSE Here.  
 RAFE What, in a paper? As I am a soldier and a gentleman, it craves a martial court. You ought to die for't. Where's your horn? Answer me to that.  
 GREENGOOSE An't like you, sir, I was oblivious.  
 RAFE It likes me not you should be so; 'tis a shame for you, and a scandal to all our neighbours, being a man of worth and estimation, to leave your horn behind you: I am afraid 'twill breed example. But let me tell you no more on't.—Stand, till I view you all.—What's become o'th nose of your flask? 133  
 I SOLDIER Indeed la, captain, 'twas blown away with powder.  
 RAFE Put on a new one at the city's charge.—Where's

59 battle-ray: battle formation  
 60 pompous: ceremonial  
 64 jerkin: jacket or short coat  
 65 house: theatre  
 71 freedom: rank of freeman in the Grocers' Company  
 74 double your files: combine your two ranks  
 76 narrowly: closely  
 service: manœuvres  
 77 take: reprehend  
 80 scouring-stick: cane used for clearing the barrel of a gun  
 86 ward: detachment of the militia  
 94-5 beat the rear up: round up with a roll of the drums  
 95 Ancient: ensign-bearer

96 Whitechapel: a parish to the east of Aldgate known for its butchers' shops  
 99 muster: roll  
 102 corslet: armour covering the body  
 Spanish pike: 'probably superior to the English' (Kinney)  
 103 shake it: with sexual connotation  
 111 piece: gun (but with sexual connotation)  
 117-18 touch-hole: the ignition hole in the breech of a gun but, as with most of the technical language in this scene, with a sexual connotation  
 120 pox: syphilis  
 121 feather, sweet oil, and paper: materials for cleaning a gun  
 126 horn: a) powder horn; b) cuckold's horn  
 127 oblivious: forgetful

the stone of this piece? 137  
 2 SOLDIER The drummer took it out to light tobacco.  
 RAFE 'Tis a fault, my friend; put it in again.—You want  
 a nose—and you a stone.—Sergeant, take a note on't,  
 for I mean to stop it in the pay.—Remove, and  
 march! Soft and fair, gentlemen, soft and fair!  
 Double your files! As you were! Faces about! Now,  
 you with the sodden face, keep in there! Look to your  
 match, sirrah, it will be in your fellow's flask anon.  
 So, make a crescent now; advance your pikes; stand,  
 and give ear! Gentlemen, countrymen, friends, and  
 my fellow-soldiers, I have brought you this day from  
 the shops of security and the counters of content, to  
 measure out in these furious fields honour by the ell,  
 and prowess by the pound. Let it not, oh, let it not, I  
 say, be told hereafter the noble issue of this city  
 fainted, but bear yourselves in this fair action like  
 men, valiant men, and freemen. Fear not the face of  
 the enemy, nor the noise of the guns, for believe me,  
 brethren, the rude rumbling of a brewer's car is far  
 more terrible, of which you have a daily experience,  
 neither let the stink of powder offend you, since a  
 more valiant stink is nightly with you. To a resolved  
 mind his home is everywhere. I speak not this to take  
 away the hope of your return; for you shall see, I do  
 not doubt it, and that very shortly, your loving wives  
 again, and your sweet children, whose care doth bear  
 you company in baskets. Remember, then, whose  
 cause you have in hand, and like a sort of true-born  
 scavengers, scour me this famous realm of enemies. I  
 have no more to say but this: stand to your tacklings,  
 lads, and show to the world you can as well brandish  
 a sword as shake an apron. Saint George, and on, my  
 hearts! 170  
 OMNES Saint George! Saint George!  
 WIFE 'Twas well done, Rafe. I'll send thee a cold capon  
 a-field, and a bottle of March beer; and it may be,  
 come myself to see thee.

- 137 stone: a) flint; b) testicle  
 139 want: lack (also implying the effects of syphilis)  
 144 sodden face: a) drunken; b) suffering the effects of the  
 sweating-tub treatment for syphilis  
 145 match: fuse for igniting musket  
 146–70 stand, and . . . my hearts!: Rafe's exhortation to his  
 soldiers parodies that of Richard to his troops in  
 Shakespeare's *Richard III* (1593), V.vi.44–81, echoes a  
 number of other pre-battle speeches in the history plays,  
 and contains some of the rhetorical features of Antony's  
 speech in *Julius Caesar* (1599–1600) III.ii.70–104  
 150 ell: a measure of forty-five inches  
 159 valiant stink: another reference with sexual  
 connotations  
 164 baskets: i.e. of provisions  
 165 sort: company  
 167 tacklings: a) weapons; b) genitals  
 173 March beer: strong beer (brewed early in the season)

CITIZEN Nell, the boy has deceived me much; I did not  
 think it had been in him. He has performed such a  
 matter, wench, that if I live, next year I'll have him  
 captain of the galley-foist, or I'll want my will. 178

Enter OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Yet, I thank God, I break not a  
 wrinkle more than I had. Not a stoup, boys? Care live  
 with cats, I defy thee! My heart is as sound as an oak,  
 and though I want drink to wet my whistle, I can  
 sing:

(Sings) *Come no more there, boys, come no more  
 there;  
 For we shall never whilst we live, come any  
 more there.*

Enter a BOY and COFFIN CARRIERS with a coffin

BOY God save you, sir.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT It's a brave boy. Canst thou sing?

BOY Yes, sir, I can sing, but 'tis not so necessary at this  
 time.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) *Sing we, and chant it, 190  
 Whilst love doth grant it.*

BOY Sir, sir, if you knew what I have brought you, you  
 would have little list to sing.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) *Oh, the minion round,  
 Full long I have thee sought,  
 And now I have thee found,  
 And what hast thou here brought?*

BOY A coffin, sir, and your dead son Jasper in it.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Dead?

(Sings) *Why, farewell he. 200  
 Thou wast a bonny boy,  
 And I did love thee.*

Enter JASPER

JASPER Then, I pray you, sir, do so still.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Jasper's ghost?

(Sings) *Thou art welcome from Stygian lake so soon;  
 Declare to me what wondrous things in  
 Pluto's court are done.*

JASPER By my troth, sir, I ne'er came there; 'tis too hot  
 for me, sir.

178 galley-foist: the Lord Mayor's state barge

179 break: show

180 stoup: measure of drink (two quarts)

180–1 Care live with cats: 'Care will kill a cat'  
 (proverbial)

184–5 *Come no . . . more there*: from *Ballets to Five Voices* by  
 Thomas Morley (1595 and 1600)

205 *Stygian lake*: the river Styx in the classical underworld  
 (Hades)

207 *Pluto's court*: Pluto was the king of Hades

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT A merry ghost, a very merry ghost! 211

(Sings) *And where is your true love. Oh, where is yours?*

JASPER Marry, look you, sir.

*Heaves up the Coffin, and LUCE climbs out*

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Ah, ha! Art thou good at that, i'faith?

(Sings) *With hey, trixy, terlery-whiskin,  
The world it runs on wheels,  
When the young man's —,  
Up goes the maiden's heels.* 219

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL *within*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*) What, Master Merrythought, will you not let's in? What do you think shall become of us?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT What voice is that that calleth at our door?

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*) You know me well enough; I am sure I have not been such a stranger to you.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) *And some they whistled, and some they sung,  
Hey, down, down!  
And some did loudly say, 230  
Ever as the Lord Barne's horn blew,  
Away, Musgrave, away.*

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*) You will not have us starve here, will you, Master Merrythought?

JASPER Nay, good sir, be persuaded, she is my mother. If her offences have been great against you, let your own love remember she is yours, and so forgive her.

LUCE Good Master Merrythought, let me entreat you; I will not be denied. 240

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*) Why, Master Merrythought, will you be a vexed thing still?

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Woman, I take you to my love again; but you shall sing before you enter; therefore dispatch your song and so come in.

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT (*within*) Well, you must have your will when all's done.—Mick, what song canst thou sing, boy?

MICHAEL (*within*) I can sing none, forsooth, but 'A Lady's Daughter of Paris' properly. 250

215 *The world it runs on wheels*: proverbial

216 *When the young man's . . .*: the omitted word is possibly 'frisking'. Some editors note the Act to Restrain the Abuses of the Players (1606) as an explanation for this omission (as in Interlude I.ii)

228–32 *And some . . . Musgrave, away*: from the ballad of Little Margaret and Lady Barnard

237 own love: self-love

242 vexed: cantankerous

MISTRESS MERRYTHOUGHT *with* MICHAEL (*within*)

SONG

*It was a lady's daughter, etc.*

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT *admits* MISTRESS

MERRYTHOUGHT and MICHAEL

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Come, you're welcome home again.

(Sings) *If such danger be in playing,  
And jest must to earnest turn,  
You shall go no more a-maying.* 256

MERCHANT (*within*) Are you within, sir? Master Merrythought?

JASPER It is my master's voice. Good sir, go hold him in talk, whilst we convey ourselves into some inward room. *Exit with* LUCE

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT What are you? Are you merry?

You must be very merry if you enter.

MERCHANT (*within*) I am, sir.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Sing then.

MERCHANT (*within*) Nay, good sir, open to me.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Sing, I say, or, by the merry heart, you come not in.

MERCHANT (*within*) Well, sir, I'll sing:

(Sings) *Fortune my foe, etc.* 270

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT *admits* MERCHANT

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT You are welcome, sir, you are welcome. You see your entertainment; pray you, be merry.

MERCHANT Oh, Master Merrythought, I am come to ask you

Forgiveness for the wrongs I offered you

And your most virtuous son; they're infinite;

Yet my contrition shall be more than they.

I do confess my hardness broke his heart,

For which just heaven hath given me punishment

More than my age can carry. His wandering spirit, 280

251 *It was a lady's daughter, etc.*: from a broadside ballad that begins:

It was a lady's daughter,  
Of Paris properly,  
Her mother her commanded  
To mass that she should hie:  
O pardon me, dear mother,  
Her daughter dear did say,  
Unto that filthy idol  
I never can obey

254–6 *If such . . . more a-maying*: from 'My Love Hath Vowed' in Philip Rosseter's *Book of Airs* (1601)  
*playing*: flirting

270 *Fortune my foe, etc.*: from a very popular song that begins:

Fortune my foe, why dost thou frown on me?  
And will thy favours never better be?  
Wilt thou, I say, for ever breed my pain?  
And wilt thou not restore my joys again?



Not yet at rest, pursues me everywhere,  
 Crying, 'I'll haunt thee for thy cruelty'.  
 My daughter, she is gone, I know not how,  
 Taken invisible, and whether living  
 Or in grave, 'tis yet uncertain to me.  
 Oh Master Merrythought, these are the weights  
 Will sink me to my grave. Forgive me, sir.  
 OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Why, sir, I do forgive you, and  
 be merry;  
 And if the wag in's lifetime played the knave,  
 Can you forgive him too?

MERCHANT With all my heart, sir. 290

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Speak it again, and heartily.

MERCHANT I do, sir,

Now, by my soul, I do.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT

(Sings) *With that came out his paramour;  
 She was as white as the lily flower,  
 Hey, trolly, trolly, lolly.*

Enter LUCE and JASPER

*With that came out her own dear knight,  
 He was as true as ever did fight. etc.*

Sir, if you will forgive 'em, clap their hands together;  
 there's no more to be said i'th' matter.

MERCHANT I do, I do. 300

CITIZEN I do not like this.—Peace, boys, hear me one  
 of you. Everybody's part is come to an end but Rafe's,  
 and he's left out.

BOY 'Tis long of yourself, sir; we have nothing to do  
 with his part.

CITIZEN Rafe, come away.—Make an end on him as  
 you have done of the rest, boys; come.

WIFE Now, good husband, let him come out and die.

CITIZEN He shall Nell.—Rafe, come away quickly and  
 die, boy. 310

BOY 'Twill be very unfit he should die, sir, upon no  
 occasion, and in a comedy too.

CITIZEN Take you no care of that, sir boy, is not his  
 part at an end, think you, when he's dead?—Come  
 away, Rafe.

Enter RAPE, with a forked arrow through his head

RAPE When I was mortal, this my costive corpse  
 Did lap up figs and raisins in the Strand,

289 wag: mischievous boy

298 clap their hands together: i.e. as a sign of betrothal

304 long: on account

SD *forked*: barbed. Parody of the entrance of Clifford in *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (1595)

316–51 parody of ghost scenes in *Eastward Ho!* (1605) by George Chapman, Ben Jonson and John Marston, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Richard III*

316 costive: reluctant (plays on 'constipated')

317 figs and raisins: fruits used as laxatives

Where sitting, I espied a lovely dame,  
 Whose master wrought with lingel and with awl,  
 And under ground he vamped many a boot. 320  
 Straight did her love prick forth me, tender sprig,  
 To follow feats of arms in warlike wise  
 Through Waltham Desert, where I did perform  
 Many achievements, and did lay on ground  
 Huge Barbaroso, that insulting giant,  
 And all his captives soon set at liberty.  
 Then honour pricked me from my native soil  
 Into Moldavia, where I gained the love  
 Of Pompiona, his beloved daughter,  
 But yet proved constant to the black-thumbed maid  
 Susan, and scorned Pompiona's love. 331

Yet liberal I was, and gave her pins,  
 And money for her father's officers.  
 I then returned home, and thrust myself  
 In action, and by all men chosen was  
 Lord of the May, where I did flourish it,  
 With scarfs and rings, and posy in my hand.  
 After this action, I preferred was,  
 And chosen city captain at Mile End,  
 With hat and feather and with leading-staff, 340  
 And trained my men and brought them all off clear  
 (Save one man that betrayed him with the noise).  
 But all these things I Rafe did undertake  
 Only for my beloved Susan's sake.

Then coming home, and sitting in my shop  
 With apron blue, Death came unto my stall  
 To cheapen *aqua vitae*—but ere I  
 Could take the bottle down, and fill a taste,  
 Death caught a pound of pepper in his hand,  
 And sprinkled all my face and body o'er, 350  
 And in an instant vanished away.

CITIZEN 'Tis a pretty fiction i'faith.

RAPE Then took I up my bow and shaft in hand,  
 And walked into Moorfields to cool myself;  
 But there grim cruel Death met me again,  
 And shot this forked arrow through my head,  
 And now I faint. Therefore be warned by me,  
 My fellows every one, of forked heads.  
 Farewell, all you good boys in merry London;  
 Ne'er shall we more upon Shrove Tuesday meet 360

319 lingel: waxed thread used by shoemakers

320 vamped: renewed the uppers of

321 prick: spur (with sexual connotation)

325 insulting: bragging

329 his: i.e. the King of Moldavia's

337 posy: bouquet

340 leading-staff: officer's baton

342 betrayed him: befouled himself

347 cheapen: bargain for

354 Moorfields: a popular summer resort north of the city walls beyond Moorgate

358 forked heads: i.e. of cuckolds

And pluck down houses of iniquity.  
 My pain increaseth.—I shall never more  
 Hold open, whilst another pumps both legs,  
 Nor daub a satin gown with rotten eggs;  
 Set up a stake, oh, never more I shall.  
 I die; fly, fly, my soul, to Grocers' Hall.  
 Oh, oh, oh, etc.

WIFE Well said, Rafe. Do your obeisance to the  
 gentlemen and go your ways. Well said, Rafe. **369**

*Exit* RAFE

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Methinks all we, thus kindly and  
 unexpectedly reconciled, should not depart without a  
 song.

MERCHANT A good motion.

OLD MERRYTHOUGHT Strike up, then.

SONG

*Better music ne'er was known  
 Than a choir of hearts in one.  
 Let each other that hath been  
 Troubled with the gall or spleen,  
 Learn of us to keep his brow  
 Smooth and plain as ours are now. **380**  
 Sing, though before the hour of dying;  
 He shall rise, and then be crying,  
 'Hey, ho, 'tis nought but mirth,  
 That keeps the body from the earth'.*

*Exeunt* OMNES

## Epilogus

CITIZEN Come Nell, shall we go? The play's done.  
 WIFE Nay, by my faith, George, I have more manners  
 than so; I'll speak to these gentlemen first.—I thank  
 you all, gentlemen, for your patience and  
 countenance to Rafe, a poor fatherless child; and if I  
 might see you at my house, it should go hard but I  
 would have a pottle of wine and a pipe of tobacco for  
 you; for, truly, I hope you do like the youth, but I  
 would be glad to know the truth. I refer it to your  
 own discretions, whether you will applaud him or no;  
 for I will wink, and whilst you shall do what you will.  
 I thank you with all my heart. God give you good  
 night.—Come, George.

*Exeunt*

FINIS

360-1 Shrove Tuesday . . . of iniquity: the last day before Lent  
 was a time of revelry and riot for apprentices who  
 sometimes attacked theatres and brothels  
 364 satin gown: the dress of gallants as dandies  
 365 Set up a stake: reference to the use of staked cockerels as  
 targets  
 371 depart: i.e. take leave of one another

7 pottle: measure of two quarts  
 tobacco: Nell's sense of hospitality (and social climbing)  
 outweighs her antipathy to tobacco at l.210-14  
 11 will wink: close my eyes  
 whilst: meanwhile

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## Ben Jonson, *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman*

First performed 1609

First published 1616

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In many ways, *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* works with the most familiar of comic raw materials. In Dauphine Eugenie's plot against his uncle, Morose, we see the struggle of youth versus age; in the manoeuvres of Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La Foole, Tom Otter and his wife, and the collegiate ladies, the play offers the customary comic battle of women versus men; and in the play's setting, in Jacobean London, we have a sense of the contest between a new kind of urban social order and an older, less commercialised one. Throughout, too, the recourse to dissembling and disguise, in particular to cross-dressing, and the dependence on characters' foibles, distortions or excesses as a source of humour and a trigger of the comic action indicate that we are in recognisable Renaissance comic territory. These staples, however, do not bring with them the usual reassurances or affirmations offered by such comedy. The end of the play, for example, is neither reintegrative nor restitutive. Although the young gallant, Dauphine, outwits Morose and secures his inheritance, thereby ensuring the triumph of youth over age (as comedy suggests it must), this is no natural succession and it is marked by no honouring of the generation on the wane. Instead, Dauphine revels in his success with a gratuitous and chilling cruelty, telling Morose that 'I'll not trouble you till you trouble me with your funeral, which I care not how soon it come' (V.iv.232–3).

Such relentlessness and remorselessness are fundamental to the play as a whole. There is no relief from, and no alternative to, the parade of buffoons, dandies and viragos that rolls across the stage, no one whose values offer a secure point of anchorage to the spectator/reader tossed between one set of follies, perversions or vices and another. The confusion or blurring of gender roles, for example, is all but total: the women are masculine and emasculating; the men are effeminate, ineffectual, or both. The misogyny of the characters is similarly unremitting, varied and vigorous (see, for example Truewit's attempt to dissuade Morose from marriage in II.ii), and is unalleviated by the more general but less acid misanthropy that also, undoubtedly, informs the play. Likewise, disguise and dissembling proliferate: Truewit pretends to be a messenger, Daw to be scholarly, La Foole to be a

servant, Morose to be impotent, Otter and Cutbeard to be lawyer and parson, and Epicoene to be a woman. No counterweight of 'reality' underlies these pretences. Beneath is either absence: Truewit says of Daw, 'A fellow so utterly nothing, as he knows not what he would be' (II.iv.164–5), or more pretence: the boy who has played Epicoene, Truewit assures us, will continue to dissemble in the post-play world (V.iv.269–70). In this 'comedy of affliction' (II.vi.38), all are afflicted; none is immune.

If anything mitigates the harshness of this diagnosis, it is the sense that these ills are not the timeless and universal results of a fallen human nature, but are socially produced. This is a city comedy, a play rooted in its urban setting and the lives and mores of its citizens (see Gibbons 1980). Characteristically for plays of this kind, the excesses of the characters are represented, as Tom Otter's tirade against his wife suggests, as those of the city itself:

All her teeth were made i' the Blackfriars, both her eyebrows i' the Strand, and her hair in Silver Street. Every part o' the town owns a piece of her . . . She takes herself asunder still when she goes to bed, into some twenty boxes.

(IV.ii.84–9)

Mistress Otter is, quite literally, the product (and indeed the property) of the newly burgeoning consumer markets of Jacobean London, with their energy, clamour and glamour. Whilst the play invites criticism of the superficiality and triviality of this consumerist playground, we also need to beware of assuming our own immunity to its appeal, for it is this very energy, with its noise, inventiveness and exuberance, that drives the plot, generates the wit, and thereby constitutes the pleasure, of this play.

The topicality of *Epicoene* is, paradoxically, as much a result of its classicism as of its devotion to contemporary detail. As the notes to the text make clear, Jonson, as was his custom, drew on and adapted the work of a wide range of classical authors – here, in particular the Greek rhetorician Libanius (AD 314–393), the Roman poet Ovid (43 BC–AD 18) and the satirist Juvenal (c. AD 60–c. 130). These models, however, far

from rendering Jonson's work archaic or obscure, give the playwright much of his caustic rhetorical arsenal. Indeed, those passages that offer a real sense of the texture of life in, and social mores of, Jacobean London (such as Truewit's diatribe against women (II.ii), or Morose's railing against noise (III.vi, IV.iv) are, more likely than not, those that are drawn most directly from their sources.

*Epicoene* was first staged in December 1609 or January 1610, by one of the boys' acting companies, at the Whitefriars, a private theatre. It was Jonson's first play for the public stage since *Volpone*, four years before, as he had concentrated on writing court masques in the intervening years. The new play was a success but was nonetheless closed in February 1610, owing to a complaint made by the king's cousin, Arbella Stuart, who detected in it a scurrilous reference to herself (see V.i.26n, the Dedication, and Jonson's defence in the second Prologue). The play was later revived at court in 1636 and, significantly, was the first play to be staged on the reopening of the theatres in 1660, after the accession of Charles II to the throne. It was much admired, by critics as diverse as Samuel Pepys and John Dryden, and proved to be the model for Restoration comic dramatists such as Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve. Its popularity declined after the mid-eighteenth century, however, and it was only in the late twentieth century, with its concern with questions of the cultural construction of gender and sexuality, that the critical gaze fell on the play again. It shows, as yet, no sign of being diverted.

## Textual note

The copytext for this edition is Jonson's 1616 folio, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*.

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- Henry Porter, *The Two Angry Women of Abington* (1598)
- Thomas Dekker, *Satiromastix* (1601)
- John Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan* (1604)
- Thomas Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1605)
- Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (1606)
- Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (1610)
- Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl* (1611)
- Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613)
- Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* (1614)
- Philip Massinger, *The City Madam* (1632)

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## *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609)

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### To the Truly Noble, by All Titles, Sir Francis Stuart:

Sir,  
My hope is not so nourished by example, as it will conclude this dumb piece should please you by cause it hath pleased others before, but by trust, that when you have read it, you will find it worthy to have displeased none. This makes that I now number you not only in the names of favour, but the names of justice, to what I write; and do, presently, call you to the exercise of that noblest and manliest virtue: as coveting rather to be freed in my fame by the authority of a judge than the credit of an undertaker. Read therefore, I pray you, and censure. There is not a line or syllable in it changed from the simplicity of the first copy. And when you shall consider, through the certain hatred of some, how much a man's innocency may be endangered by an uncertain accusation, you will, I doubt not, so begin to hate the iniquity of such natures as I shall love the contumely done me, whose end was so honourable as to be wiped off by your sentence.

Your unprofitable but true lover,                    20  
BEN. JONSON

- 
- Sir Francis Stuart: 'a learned gentleman', one of the fashionable 'heroes and wits' (John Aubrey, *Brief Lives* (1898) II.239) who met at the Mermaid tavern; he was grandson of Mary, Queen of Scots's half-brother, James
- 2 example: i.e. comparative instances from the past
  - 3 dumb piece: a) silent play (because its performance had been suppressed by the authorities); b) silent woman (depreciatory: 'piece' suggests a woman as a sexual object).
  - by cause: because
  - 6 makes: means
  - 8 presently: now
  - 10 fame: reputation
  - 11 undertaker: guarantor; also, political 'fixer'
  - 12 censure: judge
  - 13 simplicity: straightforwardness
  - 16 accusation: i.e. that *Epicoene* contained an allusion to the engagement that the bogus Prince of Moldavia claimed he had entered into with Lady Arbella Stuart, James I's cousin; see second prologue, below, and V.i.26n

### The Persons of the Play

MOROSE, *a gentleman that loves no noise*  
DAUPHINE EUGENIE, *a knight, his nephew*  
CLERIMONT, *a gentleman, his friend*  
TRUEWIT, *another friend*  
EPICOENE, *a young gentleman, supposed the silent woman*  
JOHN DAW, *a knight, her servant*  
AMOROUS LA FOOLE, *a knight also*  
THOMAS OTTER, *a land and sea captain*  
CUTBEARD, *a barber*  
MUTE, *one of Morose his servants*                    10  
MADAME HAUGHTY }  
MADAME CENTAURE } *ladies collegiates*  
MISTRESS MAVIS }

- 
- 1 MOROSE: peevish, stubborn, fretful (from Latin *morosus*)
  - 2 DAUPHINE EUGENIE: 'well-born heir', from Greek (ευγενιος: well-born), and dauphin (title of king of France's eldest son). The feminising of 'dauphin' by the addition of the final 'e' is indicative of the 'epicene' nature of this character; the same can be said of both La Foole's and Madame Centaure's names. 'Eugenie' also suggests French *génie* (wit). The connection with the French is significant, as this indicates both fashion and sexual unnaturalness in the play
  - 3 CLERIMONT: echoes French *clairement* (clearly, plainly)
  - 5 EPICOENE: having the characteristics of both sexes
  - 6 JOHN DAW: i.e. jackdaw, a bird known for its 'loquacity and thievish propensities' (OED); 'daw' also meant a simpleton or fool
  - servant: lover devoted to his mistress
  - 7 LA FOOLE: the feminine form of the name; see note to l. 2 above
  - 8 OTTER: amphibious animal (see I.iv.26), creature of two elements; thus suggestive of indeterminacy
  - 12 CENTAURE: mythical creature, half man, half horse; suggestive of wildness and animal lustfulness
  - collegiates*: belonging to a college, i.e. a club or society
  - 13 MAVIS: a song thrush; eds also cite sense from John Florio's *A World of Words* (1598): 'an ill face'

BEN JONSON

MISTRESS TRUSTY, *the Lady Haughty's woman* } pretenders  
MISTRESS OTTER, *the Captain's wife* }  
*Parson, Pages, Servants, Musicians*

**The scene**

LONDON

**Prologue**

Truth says, of old, the art of making plays  
Was to content the people, and their praise  
Was to the poet money, wine, and bays.  
But in this age a sect of writers are,  
That only for particular likings care,  
And will taste nothing that is popular.  
With such we mingle neither brains nor breasts;  
Our wishes, like to those make public feasts  
Are not to please the cooks' tastes, but the guests'.  
Yet if those cunning palates hither come, 10  
They shall find guests' entreaty and good room;  
And though all relish not, sure, there will be some  
That, when they leave their seats, shall make 'em say,  
Who wrote that piece could so have wrote a play,  
But that he knew this was the better way.  
For to present all custard or all tart  
And have no other meats to bear a part,  
Or to want bread and salt, were but coarse art.  
The poet prays you, then, with better thought  
To sit, and when his cates are all in brought, 20  
Though there be none far-fet, there will dear-bought  
Be fit for ladies; some for lords, knights, squires,

14-15 *pretenders*: claimants, aspirants (to membership of the ladies' college)  
1-2 the art . . . people: echoing the opening lines of the prologue to *Andria* by the Roman comic poet Terence  
3 bays: fame (from wreath of bay laurel given to poets)  
4-5 sect . . . particular likings: perhaps an allusion to playwrights (such as Marston and Chapman) who wrote only for the 'particular likings' (special tastes) of the private theatre audiences; Jonson himself wrote for both private and public playhouses; see Introduction  
8 those make: those who make  
10 cunning: learned, expert  
11 entreaty: entertainment  
12 all relish not: not everything is to their taste  
16 custard: open pie of fruit or meat, covered with a spiced and sweetened mixture of broth or milk and eggs  
17 meats: dishes  
20 cates: food, especially delicacies  
21-2 none . . . ladies: proverbial: 'dear bought and far fetched are dainties for ladies' (Tilley 1950: 138; D12)

Some for your waiting-wench and city-wires,  
Some for your men and daughters of Whitefriars.  
Nor is it only while you keep your seat  
Here that his feast will last, but you shall eat  
A week at ord'naries on his broken meat:  
If his muse be true,  
Who commends her to you.

**Another, occasioned by some person's impertinent exception**

The ends of all who for the scene do write  
Are, or should be, to profit and delight.  
And still 't hath been the praise of all best times,  
So persons were not touched, to tax the crimes.  
Then, in this play, which we present tonight,  
And make the object of your ear and sight,  
On forfeit of yourselves, think nothing true,  
Lest so you make the maker to judge you.  
For he knows, poet never credit gained  
By writing truths, but things (like truths) well 10  
feigned.  
If any yet will (with particular sleight  
Of application) wrest what he doth write,  
And that he meant or him or her will say,  
They make a libel which he made a play.

23 city-wires: fashionable city women; wires were used to support their ruffs and hair  
24 Whitefriars: a reference to the theatre in which *Epicœne* was performed; also the area in which the theatre was located, notorious as a refuge for thieves and prostitutes since it was outside the jurisdiction of the city authorities  
27 ord'naries: eating houses  
broken meat: fragments of food left after a meal  
29 her: i.e. herself  
*occasioned . . . exception*: see Dedication, l. 16n  
1 scene: stage  
1-2 The ends . . . delight: famous Horatian maxim (*Ars Poetica*, 343-4)  
3 still: always  
4 So: as long as  
touched: accused  
So . . . crimes: maxim from Martial, *Epigrams*, X.xxxiii  
7 true: real, relating to an actual event  
8 maker: poet (literal meaning of Greek ποιητης)  
9-10 poet . . . feigned: from Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 338  
12 application: interpreting play or literary text as referring to real contemporary events and people; a popular pastime of London audiences  
13 or . . . or: either . . . or

## Act I, scene i

*Enter CLERIMONT. He comes out making himself ready, followed by BOY*

CLERIMONT Ha' you got the song yet perfect I ga' you, boy?

BOY Yes, sir.

CLERIMONT Let me hear it.

BOY You shall, sir, but i' faith let nobody else.

CLERIMONT Why, I pray?

BOY It will get you the dangerous name of a poet in town, sir, besides me a perfect deal of ill will at the mansion you wot of, whose lady is the argument of it, where now I am the welcom'st thing under a man that comes there. II

CLERIMONT I think, and above a man too, if the truth were racked out of you.

BOY No, faith, I'll confess before, sir. The gentlewomen play with me and throw me o' the bed, and carry me in to my lady; and she kisses me with her oiled face, and puts a peruke o' my head, and asks me an' I will wear her gown, and I say no; and then she hits me a blow o' the ear and calls me innocent, and lets me go. 19

CLERIMONT No marvel if the door be kept shut against your master, when the entrance is so easy to you—well, sir, you shall go there no more, lest I be fain to seek your voice in my lady's rushes a fortnight hence. Sing, sir. BOY sings

*Enter TRUEWIT*

TRUEWIT Why, here's the man that can melt away his time, and never feels it! What, between his mistress abroad and his ingle at home, high fare, soft lodging,

*SD making . . . ready: dressing*

1 perfect: i.e. perfectly memorised

7 dangerous . . . poet: because poets (including playwrights) satirised their follies, they were regarded with scorn: 'He is upbraidingly called a poet, as if it were a most contemptible nickname' (Jonson, *Discoveries*, ll. 284–5, p. 529, in Donaldson 1985)

9 wot: know  
argument: subject

10 under: less than (with sexual pun; see 'ingle', l. 27)

17 an': if

19 innocent: simpleton; also, child

22 fain: obliged

22–3 lest I . . . rushes: i.e. in case you gain sexual maturity too early. Clerimont suggests this by referring to the breaking (and thus lowering) of the boy's voice, when it would be found 'in my lady's rushes', i.e. at floor level (rushes were used as a floor covering). His voice is significant because he sings, and Clerimont does not wish him to lose his treble. The phrase also has obvious sexual connotations

27 abroad: away from home

ingle: boy kept for homosexual purposes, catamite

fine clothes, and his fiddle, he thinks the hours ha' no wings or the day no post-horse. Well, sir gallant, were you struck with the plague this minute, or condemned to any capital punishment tomorrow, you would begin then to think, and value every article o' your time, esteem it at the true rate, and give all for't. 34

CLERIMONT Why, what should a man do?

TRUEWIT Why, nothing, or that which, when 'tis done, is as idle. Hearken after the next horse-race, or hunting-match; lay wagers, praise Puppy, or Peppercorn, Whitefoot, Franklin; swear upon Whitmane's party; spend aloud that my lords may hear you; visit my ladies at night, and be able to give 'em the character of every bowler or bettor o' the green. These be the things wherein your fashionable men exercise themselves, and I for company. 44

CLERIMONT Nay, if I have thy authority, I'll not leave yet. Come, the other are considerations when we come to have grey heads and weak hams, moist eyes and shrunk members. We'll think on 'em then; then we'll pray and fast.

TRUEWIT Ay, and destine only that time of age to goodness which our want of ability will not let us employ in evil? 52

CLERIMONT Why then 'tis time enough.

TRUEWIT Yes: as if a man should sleep all the term and think to effect his business the last day. Oh, Clerimont, this time, because it is an incorporeal thing, and not subject to sense, we mock ourselves the fineliest out of it, with vanity and misery indeed; not seeking an end of wretchedness, but only changing the matter still. 60

CLERIMONT Nay, thou'lt not leave now—

TRUEWIT See but our common disease! With what justice can we complain that great men will not look upon us nor be at leisure to give our affairs such dispatch as we expect, when we will never do it to ourselves, nor hear nor regard ourselves.

CLERIMONT Foh, thou hast read Plutarch's *Morals*

33 article o' your time: moment

37 idle: vain, useless

Hearken: inquire

38–40 Puppy . . . Whitmane: 'horses o' the time' (Jonson's marginal note)

40 spend aloud: talk noisily; Holdsworth suggests 'spend ostentatiously'

45 leave: leave off

54 term: when the law courts were in session

58 fineliest: most perfectly or ingeniously

60 still: continually

62 disease: i.e. discontent, caused by lack of patronage

67 Plutarch's *Morals*: the *Moralia*, widely read in the Renaissance



now, or some such tedious fellow; and it shows so vilely with thee, 'fore God, 'twill spoil thy wit utterly. Talk me of pins, and feathers, and ladies, and rushes, and such things, and leave this stoicity alone till thou mak'st sermons. 72

TRUEWIT Well, sir. If it will not take, I have learned to lose as little of my kindness as I can. I'll do good to no man against his will, certainly. When were you at the college?

CLERIMONT What college?

TRUEWIT As if you knew not!

CLERIMONT No, faith, I came but from court yesterday. 80

TRUEWIT Why, is it not arrived there yet, the news? A new foundation, sir, here i' the town, of ladies that call themselves the Collegiates, an order between courtiers and country madams, that live from their husbands, and give entertainment to all the Wits and Braveries o' the time, as they call 'em; cry down, or up, what they like or dislike in a brain or a fashion with most masculine, or rather hermaphroditical authority; and every day gain to their college some new probationer. 90

CLERIMONT Who is the president?

TRUEWIT The grave and youthful matron, the Lady Haughty.

CLERIMONT A pox of her autumnal face, her pieced beauty: there's no man can be admitted till she be ready, nowadays, till she has painted, and perfumed, and washed, and scoured, but the boy here; and him she wipes her oiled lips upon like a sponge. I have made a song, I pray thee hear it, o' the subject.

BOY sings

SONG

Still to be neat, still to be dressed, 100  
As you were going to a feast;  
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:  
Lady, it is to be presumed,  
Though art's hid causes are not found,  
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

68 some . . . fellow: Seneca, the Roman stoic philosopher, to

whose *De Brevitate Vitae* Truewit has been alluding

70 pins . . . feathers . . . rushes: trivialities; 'ladies' are also included in this category

71 stoicity: stoicism (Clerimont's coinage)

73 take: succeed

85-6 Wits and Braveries: gallants, noted respectively for witty talk and fashionable dress

86-7 cry down, or up: decry or applaud

94 pieced: a) patched; b) pieced together

100-11 Still . . . heart: translation of anonymous lyric, *Semper munditias, semper, Basilissa, decores*, in the *Anthologia Latina*, first published 1572

100 Still: always

Give me a look, give me a face,  
That makes simplicity a grace;  
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:  
Such sweet neglect more taketh me  
Than all th' adulteries of art. 110  
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

TRUEWIT And I am, clearly, o' the other side: I love a good dressing before any beauty o' the world. Oh, a woman is, then, like a delicate garden; nor is there one kind of it: she may vary every hour; take often counsel of her glass, and choose the best. If she have good ears, show 'em; good hair, lay it out; good legs, wear short clothes; a good hand, discover it often; practise any art to mend breath, cleanse teeth, repair eyebrows, paint, and profess it. 120

CLERIMONT How? Publicly?

TRUEWIT The doing of it, not the manner: that must be private. Many things that seem foul i' the doing, do please, done. A lady should indeed study her face, when we think she sleeps; nor, when the doors are shut, should men be inquiring; all is sacred within, then. Is it for us to see their perukes put on, their false teeth, their complexion, their eyebrows, their nails? You see gilders will not work but enclosed. They must not discover how little serves, with the help of art, to adorn a great deal. How long did the canvas hang afore Aldgate? Were the people suffered to see the city's *Love* and *Charity* while they were rude stone, before they were painted and burnished? No. No more should servants approach their mistresses but when they are complete, and finished. 136

CLERIMONT Well said, my Truewit.

TRUEWIT And a wise lady will keep a guard always upon the place, that she may do things securely. I once followed a rude fellow into a chamber, where the poor madam, for haste, and troubled, snatched at her peruke to cover her baldness and put it on the wrong way.

CLERIMONT Oh prodigy! 144

TRUEWIT And the unconscionable knave held her in compliment an hour, with that reversed face, when I

107 simplicity: lack of adornment

109 taketh: captivates

110 adulteries: adulterations

113 dressing: adornment

118 discover: reveal, as also in I.i.130

120 profess: declare

122-48 derived from Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, III, ll. 209-47

131-4 How . . . burnished: Aldgate, the main eastern gate to the city of London, was rebuilt in 1609. The new gate had a statue on each side, one representing Peace, the other Charity

135 servants: lovers

144 prodigy: monstrous thing

still looked when she should talk from the tother side.

CLERIMONT Why thou shouldst ha' relieved her.

TRUEWIT No, faith, I let her alone, as we'll let this argument, if you please, and pass to another. When saw you Dauphine Eugenie? **152**

CLERIMONT Not these three days. Shall we go to him this morning? He is very melancholic, I hear.

TRUEWIT Sick o' the uncle, is he? I met that stiff piece of formality, his uncle, yesterday, with a huge turban of nightcaps on his head, buckled over his ears.

CLERIMONT Oh, that's his custom when he walks abroad. He can endure no noise, man. **160**

TRUEWIT So I have heard. But is the disease so ridiculous in him as it is made? They say he has been upon divers treaties with the fishwives and orange-women, and articles propounded between them. Marry, the chimney-sweepers will not be drawn in.

CLERIMONT No, nor the broom-men: they stand out stiffly. He cannot endure a costardmonger, he swoons if he hears one.

TRUEWIT Methinks a smith should be ominous. **168**

CLERIMONT Or any hammerman. A brazier is not suffered to dwell in the parish, nor an armourer. He would have hanged a pewterer's 'prentice once upon a Shrove Tuesday's riot for being o' that trade, when the rest were quit.

TRUEWIT A trumpet should fright him terribly, or the hautboys?

CLERIMONT Out of his senses. The waits of the city have a pension of him, not to come near that ward. This youth practised on him, one night, like the

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155 Sick o' the uncle: pun on 'sick of the mother' (hysteria)  
 161 made: made out to be  
 been: entered  
 161-73 derived from Libanius, *Declamation XXVI*, sections 8 and 36  
 162-3 fishwives and orangewomen: notoriously noisy street-vendors  
 articles: terms and conditions  
 165 broom-men: either street-sweepers or broom-sellers  
 166 stiffly: resolutely  
 costardmonger: fruit-seller  
 169 hammerman: metal-worker  
 brazier: worker in brass  
 172 Shrove Tuesday's riot: traditionally the time that apprentices went on the rampage, wrecking theatres and brothels  
 173 quit: acquitted  
 175 hautboys: oboes (French *hautbois*)  
 176 waits: bands of street musicians, maintained at the public charge  
 177 ward: district of the city  
 178 This youth: i.e. Clerimont's boy  
 practised: played a trick

bellman, and never left till he had brought him down to the door with a long sword, and there left him flourishing with the air. **181**

BOY Why, sir! He hath chosen a street to lie in, so narrow at both ends, that it will receive no coaches, nor carts, nor any of these common noises; and therefore we that love him devise to bring him in such as we may, now and then, for his exercise, to breathe him. He would grow resty else in his ease. His virtue would rust without action. I entreated a bearward, one day, to come down with the dogs of some four parishes that way, and I thank him he did, and cried his games under Master Morose's window, till he was sent crying away, with his head made a most bleeding spectacle to the multitude. And, another time, a fencer, marching to his prize, had his drum most tragically run through, for taking that street in his way, at my request. **196**

TRUEWIT A good wag. How does he for the bells?

CLERIMONT Oh, i' the queen's time he was wont to go out of town every Saturday at ten o'clock, or on holiday eves. But now, by reason of the sickness, the perpetuity of ringing has made him devise a room with double walls, and treble ceilings, the windows close shut, and caulked; and there he lives by candlelight. He turned away a man last week for having a pair of new shoes that creaked. And this fellow waits on him now in tennis-court socks, or slippers soled with wool; and they talk each to other in a trunk. See, who comes here. **208**

## Act I, scene ii

*Enter DAUPHINE*

DAUPHINE How now! What ail you, sirs? Dumb?

TRUEWIT Struck into stone, almost, I am here, with tales o' thine uncle! There was never such a prodigy heard of.

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179 bellman: night-watchman, who called the hours, ringing a bell  
 182 lie: live  
 187 breathe: exercise briskly (usually used of horses)  
 resty: sluggish (used of horses)  
 188 virtue: special quality (i.e. obsession with noise); also 'vigour'  
 189 bearward: keeper of bears for baiting  
 191 cried his games: announced the bear-baiting  
 194 prize: fencing-match  
 197 wag: mischievous boy  
 200 sickness: plague, particularly virulent in 1609 (the year *Epicoene* was written)  
 201 perpetuity of ringing: a reference to the tolling of bells for those dead of the plague  
 204 turned . . . man: dismissed a servant  
 208 trunk: speaking-tube  
 3 prodigy: monster

DAUPHINE I would you would once lose this subject, my masters, for my sake. They are such as you are that have brought me into that predicament I am with him.

TRUEWIT How is that?

DAUPHINE Marry, that he will disinherit me, no more. He thinks I and my company are authors of all the ridiculous acts and monuments are told of him. **11**

TRUEWIT 'Slid, I would be the author of more, to vex him; that purpose deserves it: it gives thee law of plaguing him. I'll tell thee what I would do. I would make a false almanac; get it printed; and then ha' him drawn out on a coronation day to the Tower Wharf, and kill him with the noise of the ordnance.

Disinherit thee! He cannot, man. Art not thou next of blood, and his sister's son?

DAUPHINE Ay, but he will thrust me out of it, he vows, and marry. **21**

TRUEWIT How! That's a more portent. Can he endure no noise, and will venture on a wife?

CLERIMONT Yes. Why, thou art a stranger, it seems, to his best trick yet. He has employed a fellow this half year, all over England, to hearken him out a dumb woman, be she of any form, or any quality, so she be able to bear children: her silence is dowry enough, he says.

TRUEWIT But I trust to God he has found none. **30**

CLERIMONT No, but he has heard of one that's lodged i' the next street to him, who is exceedingly soft-spoken; thrifty of her speech; that spends but six words a day. And her he's about now, and shall have her.

TRUEWIT Is't possible! Who is his agent i' the business?

CLERIMONT Marry, a barber, one Cutbeard, an honest fellow, one that tells Dauphine all here.

TRUEWIT Why, you oppress me with wonder! A woman, and a barber, and love no noise! **39**

4 once: once and for all

11 acts and monuments: the first edition (1563) of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* was entitled *Acts and Monuments*. This anti-Catholic history of the Christian church made special reference to the Protestant martyrs of Mary Tudor's reign (1553–8), and proved very popular, going into four editions during the author's lifetime (1516–87) alone

12 'Slid: God's (eye)lid; a common oath

13 that purpose: i.e. Morose's plan to disinherit Dauphine. gives thee law: authorises you

16 Tower Wharf: where guns fired a salute on the anniversary of James VI of Scotland's coronation as James I of England

22 more: greater

26 hearken him out: search out

27 quality: rank

38 oppress: overwhelm

39 woman . . . barber: both traditionally noted for being talkative

CLERIMONT Yes, faith. The fellow trims him silently and has not the knack with his shears or his fingers; and that continence in a barber he thinks so eminent a virtue, as it has made him chief of his counsel. **43**

TRUEWIT Is the barber to be seen? Or the wench?

CLERIMONT Yes, that they are.

TRUEWIT I pray thee, Dauphine, let's go thither.

DAUPHINE I have some business now; I cannot i' faith.

TRUEWIT You shall have no business shall make you neglect this, sir. We'll make her talk, believe it; or if she will not, we can give out at least so much as shall interrupt the treaty. We will break it. Thou art bound in conscience, when he suspects thee without cause, to torment him. **53**

DAUPHINE Not I, by any means. I'll give no suffrage to't. He shall never ha' that plea against me, that I opposed the least fant'sy of his. Let it lie upon my stars to be guilty, I'll be innocent.

TRUEWIT Yes, and be poor, and beg; do, innocent, when some groom of his has got him an heir, or this barber, if he himself cannot. Innocent! I pray thee, Ned, where lies she? Let him be innocent still. **61**

CLERIMONT Why, right over against the barber's, in the house where Sir John Daw lies.

TRUEWIT You do not mean to confound me!

CLERIMONT Why?

TRUEWIT Does he that would marry her know so much?

CLERIMONT I cannot tell.

TRUEWIT 'Twere enough of imputation to her, with him. **70**

CLERIMONT Why?

TRUEWIT The only talking sir i'th'town! Jack Daw!

And he teach her not to speak—God b'w'you. I have some business too.

CLERIMONT Will you not go thither then?

TRUEWIT Not with the danger to meet Daw, for mine ears.

CLERIMONT Why? I thought you two had been upon very good terms.

TRUEWIT Yes, of keeping distance. **80**

41 knack: snapping or clicking noise

43 chief of his counsel: his main confidant

50 give out: put about

51 treaty: negotiation

54 suffrage: consent

56 fant'sy: 'fancy, imagination; also, fantasy – whim, desire, delusion' (Procter)

lie upon: be ordained by

58 innocent: fool, simpleton

59 groom: servant

got: begot

64 confound: dumbfound, amaze

69 to her: against her

72 only: pre-eminent

CLERIMONT They say he is a very good scholar.  
 TRUEWIT Ay, and he says it first. A pox on him, a fellow that pretends only to learning, buys titles, and nothing else of books in him.  
 CLERIMONT The world reports him to be very learned.  
 TRUEWIT I am sorry the world should so conspire to belie him.  
 CLERIMONT Good faith, I have heard very good things come from him. **89**  
 TRUEWIT You may. There's none so desperately ignorant to deny that: would they were his own. God b'w'you, gentlemen. *Exit*  
 CLERIMONT This is very abrupt!

### Act I, scene iii

DAUPHINE Come, you are a strange open man to tell everything thus.  
 CLERIMONT Why, believe it, Dauphine, Truewit's a very honest fellow.  
 DAUPHINE I think no other, but this frank nature of his is not for secrets.  
 CLERIMONT Nay, then, you are mistaken, Dauphine; I know where he has been well trusted, and discharged the trust very truly and heartily. **9**  
 DAUPHINE I contend not, Ned, but with the fewer a business is carried, it is ever the safer. Now we are alone, if you'll go thither, I am for you.  
 CLERIMONT When were you there?  
 DAUPHINE Last night: and such a Decameron of sport fallen out. Boccace never thought of the like. Daw does nothing but court her; and the wrong way. He would lie with her, and praises her modesty; desires that she would talk, and be free, and commends her silence in verses, which he reads and swears are the best that ever man made. Then rails at his fortunes, stamps, and mutines why he is not made a councillor and called to affairs of state. **22**  
 CLERIMONT I pray thee, let's go. I would fain partake

83 pretends only to: makes a claim to  
 9 heartily: sincerely  
 10 contend: dispute  
 12 thither: i.e. to visit Epicoene  
 14 Decameron of sport: 'masterpiece of fun' (Herford and Simpson). *The Decameron* (1349–51), a collection of one hundred tales written by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75), is much concerned with the intrigues and follies of romantic love. *The Decameron* had great influence on English authors, and translations of many of the tales had appeared in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566–7), a volume on which many contemporary dramatists drew  
 fallen out: happened  
 18 free: uninhibited in her speech, and sexually  
 21 mutines why: rebels because

this. Some water, boy. *Exit* BOY  
 DAUPHINE We are invited to dinner together, he and I, by one that came thither to him, Sir La Foole.  
 CLERIMONT Oh, that's a precious manikin!  
 DAUPHINE Do you know him? **28**  
 CLERIMONT Ay, and he will know you too, if e'er he saw you but once, though you should meet him at church in the midst of prayers. He is one of the Braveries, though he be none o' the Wits. He will salute a judge upon the bench, and a bishop in the pulpit, a lawyer when he is pleading at the bar, and a lady when she is dancing in a masque, and put her out. He does give plays, and suppers, and invites his guests to 'em aloud, out of his window, as they ride by in coaches. He has a lodging in the Strand for the purpose, or to watch when ladies are gone to the china-houses, or the Exchange, that he may meet 'em by chance and give 'em presents, some two or three hundred pounds' worth of toys, to be laughed at. He is never without a spare banquet, or sweetmeats in his chamber, for their women to alight at and come up to, for a bait. **44**  
 DAUPHINE Excellent! He was a fine youth last night, but now he is much finer! What is his christen name? I ha' forgot.

*Enter* BOY

CLERIMONT Sir Amorous La Foole.  
 BOY The gentleman is here below that owns that name.  
 CLERIMONT 'Heart, he's come to invite me to dinner, I hold my life. **51**  
 DAUPHINE Like enough. Pray thee, let's ha' him up.  
 CLERIMONT Boy, marshal him.  
 BOY With a truncheon, sir?

24 Some water: some eds gloss this as a call for a boat to carry them on the river (a common form of travel); however, since Clerimont entered in l.i 'making himself ready', the call for water could also relate to these doubtless elaborate rituals of washing and dressing  
 27 manikin: little man, puppet  
 35–6 give plays: pays for private performances by professional theatre companies (eds)  
 38 Strand: street in central London where many of the gentry lived  
 39 china-houses: shops selling goods from China and other eastern countries; fashionable meeting places at this time  
 40 Exchange: the New Exchange, with its many fashionable milliners' and jewellers' shops, was situated in the Strand and opened in 1609  
 42 toys: trifles, trumpery  
 banquet: course of sweetmeats, fruit and wine  
 43–4 their women: serving-women of the ladies  
 44 bait: a) refreshment, snack; b) food as a lure (using the women to catch the ladies) (Holdsworth)  
 46 christen: Christian  
 53 marshal: usher  
 54 truncheon: a) marshal's baton; b) cudgel

CLERIMONT Away, I beseech you. (*Exit BOY*) I'll make him tell us his pedigree now; and what meat he has to dinner; and who are his guests; and the whole course of his fortunes, with a breath.

## Act I, scene iv

*Enter LA FOOLE*

LA FOOLE 'Save, dear Sir Dauphine, honoured Master Clerimont.

CLERIMONT Sir Amorous! You have very much honored my lodging with your presence.

LA FOOLE Good faith, it is a fine lodging! Almost as delicate a lodging as mine.

CLERIMONT Not so, sir.

LA FOOLE Excuse me, sir, if it were i' the Strand, I assure you. I am come, Master Clerimont, to entreat you wait upon two or three ladies to dinner today. **10**

CLERIMONT How, sir! Wait upon 'em? Did you ever see me carry dishes?

LA FOOLE No, sir, dispense with me; I meant to bear 'em company.

CLERIMONT Oh, that I will, sir. The doubtfulness o' your phrase, believe it, sir, would breed you a quarrel once an hour with the terrible boys, if you should but keep 'em fellowship a day.

LA FOOLE It should be extremely against my will, sir, if I contested with any man. **20**

CLERIMONT I believe it, sir. Where hold you your feast?

LA FOOLE At Tom Otter's, sir.

DAUPHINE Tom Otter? What's he?

LA FOOLE Captain Otter, sir; he is a kind of gamester, but he has had command, both by sea and by land.

DAUPHINE Oh, then he is *animal amphibium*?

LA FOOLE Ay, sir. His wife was the rich china-woman that the courtiers visited so often, that gave the rare entertainment. She commands all at home.

CLERIMONT Then she is Captain Otter? **30**

LA FOOLE You say very well, sir. She is my kinswoman, a La Foole by the mother side, and will invite any great ladies for my sake.

DAUPHINE Not of the La Fooles of Essex?

LA FOOLE No, sir, the La Fooles of London.

56 meat: food

58 with a breath: all in one breath

1 'Save: God save you

4 honored: honoured

13 dispense with me: excuse me (affectedly), though Clerimont's reponse plays with the sense of 'do without me'

17 terrible boys: 'roaring boys' were gangs of swaggering young men ready to fight at the least provocation

24 gamester: player of a game; in this case, bear-baiting

27 china-woman: owner of a china-house

28 rare: pun on a) excellent and b) infrequent

CLERIMONT (*Aside to DAUPHINE*) Now h'is in. **36**

LA FOOLE They all come out of our house, the La Fooles o' the north, the La Fooles of the west, the La Fooles of the east and south—we are as ancient a family as any is in Europe—but I myself am descended lineally of the French La Fooles—and we do bear for our coat yellow, or *or*, checkered *azure*, and *gules*, and some three or four colours more, which is a very noted coat, and has, sometimes, been solemnly worn by divers nobility of our house—but let that go, antiquity is not respected now—I had a brace of fat does sent me, gentlemen, and half a dozen of pheasants, a dozen or two of godwits, and some other fowl, which I would have eaten while they are good, and in good company—there will be a great lady or two, my Lady Haughty, my Lady Centaure, Mistress Dol Mavis—and they come a' purpose to see the silent gentlewoman, Mistress Epicoene, that honest Sir John Daw has promised to bring thither—and then Mistress Trusty, my Lady's woman, will be there too, and this honourable knight, Sir Dauphine, with yourself, Master Clerimont—and we'll be very merry, and have fiddlers, and dance—I have been a mad wag, in my time, and have spent some crowns since I was a page in court to my Lord Lofty, and after my Lady's gentleman-usher, who got me knighted in Ireland, since it pleased my elder brother to die—I had as fair a gold jerkin on that day as any was worn in the Island Voyage, or at Caliz, none dispraised, and I came over in it hither, showed myself to my friends in court, and after went down to my tenants, in the

36 in: 'underway' (Holdsworth)

42 coat: coat of arms (though also suggests the motley coat of a jester)

42-3 *or . . . azure . . . gules*: heraldic terms for gold, blue and red

44 noted: celebrated

sometimes: in former times (as well as the usual meaning)

48 godwits: marsh birds, seen as a delicacy

61 after: i.e. after that, I was

62 gentleman-usher: gentleman who serves a person of higher rank

Ireland: Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex (1566-1601), had created so many knights in his 1599 campaign to subjugate Ireland that he was accused of cheapening the title. A group of these newly created knights formed Essex's escort on his unauthorised return to England in September 1599, after which Elizabeth held him in detention

65 Island Voyage: Essex's expedition to the Azores in 1597, which aimed to defeat Spain's Irish Armada, ended in failure and recrimination

Caliz: Cadiz, captured from the Spanish by Essex and the English fleet in 1596

country, and surveyed my lands, let new leases, took their money, spent it in the eye o' the land here, upon ladies—and now I can take up at my pleasure. 70  
 DAUPHINE Can you take up ladies, sir?  
 CLERIMONT Oh, let him breathe, he has not recovered.  
 DAUPHINE Would I were your half, in that commodity—  
 LA FOOLE No, sir, excuse me: I meant money, which can take up anything. I have another guest or two to invite and say as much to, gentlemen. I'll take my leave abruptly, in hope you will not fail—Your servant. *Exit*  
 DAUPHINE We will not fail you, sir precious La Foole; but she shall that your ladies come to see, if I have credit afore Sir Daw. 82  
 CLERIMONT Did you ever hear such a wind-fucker as this?  
 DAUPHINE Or such a rook as the other, that will betray his mistress to be seen! Come, 'tis time we prevented it.  
 CLERIMONT Go.

*Exeunt*

**Act II, scene i**

*Enter MOROSE, MUTE*

MOROSE Cannot I yet find out a more compendious method than by this trunk to save my servants the labour of speech, and mine ears the discord of sounds? Let me see. All discourses but mine own afflict me, they seem harsh, impertinent, and irksome. Is it not possible that thou shouldst answer me by signs, and I apprehend thee, fellow? Speak not, though I question you. You have taken the ring off from the street door, as I bade you? Answer me not by speech, but by silence, unless it be otherwise. *(At the breaches, still the fellow makes legs, or signs)* Very

good. And you have fastened on a thick quilt, or flock-bed, on the outside of the door; that if they knock with their daggers, or with brickbats, they can make no noise? But with your leg, your answer, unless it be otherwise.—Very good. This is not only fit modesty in a servant, but good state and discretion in a master. And you have been with Cutbeard, the barber, to have him come to me?—Good. And he will come presently? Answer me not but with your leg, unless it be otherwise; if it be otherwise, shake your head or shrug.—*(MUTE makes a leg)* So. Your Italian and Spaniard are wise in these! And it is a frugal and comely gravity. How long will it be, ere Cutbeard come? Stay, if an hour, hold up your whole hand; if half an hour, two fingers; if a quarter, one.—*(MUTE holds up one finger bent)* Good; half a quarter? 'Tis well. And have you given him a key, to come in without knocking?—Good. And is the lock oiled, and the hinges, today?—Good. And the quilting of the stairs nowhere worn out, and bare?—Very good. I see by much doctrine and impulsion, it may be effected. Stand by. The Turk in this divine discipline is admirable, exceeding all the potentates of the earth; still waited on by mutes, and all his commands so executed; yea, even in the war (as I have heard) and in his marches, most of his charges and directions given by signs, and with silence: an exquisite art! And I am heartily ashamed and angry oftentimes that the princes of Christendom should suffer a barbarian to transcend 'em in so high a point of felicity. I will practise it hereafter. *(One winds a horn without)* How now? Oh! Oh! What villain, what prodigy of mankind is that? Look. *(Exit MUTE. Horn sounds again)*—Oh! cut his throat, cut his throat! What murderer, hell-hound, devil can this be? 46

*Enter MUTE*

MUTE It is a post from the court—  
 MOROSE Out, rogue! And must thou blow thy horn too?  
 MUTE Alas, it is a post from the court, sir, that says he must speak with you, pain of death—  
 MOROSE Pain of thy life, be silent!

69 eye o' the land: i.e. London  
 70 take up: borrow money (with interest on the loan)  
 73 half: partner  
 74 commodity: 'the practice by which borrowers had to receive part of a loan in worthless goods, which were bought back by the moneylender at a much lower price' (Procter)  
 76 take up: buy  
 81-2 have credit afore: take precedence to  
 83 wind-fucker: kestrel; used as a term of opprobrium  
 85 rook: simpleton  
 1 compendious: expeditious, direct  
 2 trunk: speaking-tube  
 5 impertinent: irrelevant  
 8 ring: door-knocker  
 SD *breaches*: breaks in the text  
*still*: always  
*makes legs*: bows

14 brickbats: pieces of brick  
 15 But: only  
 17 state: dignified behaviour  
 discretion: judgement  
 20 presently: immediately  
 32 doctrine: teaching  
 impulsion: instigation, prompting  
 33 stand by: stand aside  
 35 still: always  
 SD *winds*: blows  
 44 prodigy: monster  
 50 post: express messenger

## Act II, scene ii

*Enter TRUEWIT with a post-horn and halter*

TRUEWIT By your leave, sir (I am a stranger here), is your name Master Morose? Is your name Master Morose? Fishes! Pythagoreans all! This is strange! What say you, sir, nothing? Has Harpocrates been here, with his club, among you? Well sir, I will believe you to be the man, at this time; I will venture upon you, sir. Your friends at court commend 'em to you, sir—

MOROSE (*Aside*) Oh men! Oh manners! Was there ever such an impudence? 10

TRUEWIT And are extremely solicitous for you, sir.

MOROSE Whose knave are you?

TRUEWIT Mine own knave, and your compeer, sir.

MOROSE Fetch me my sword—

TRUEWIT You shall taste the one half of my dagger if you do, groom, and you the other if you stir, sir; be patient, I charge you, in the king's name, and hear me without insurrection. They say you are to marry? To marry! Do you mark, sir?

MOROSE How then, rude companion! 20

TRUEWIT Marry, your friends do wonder, sir, the Thames being so near, wherein you may drown so handsomely; or London Bridge, at a low fall, with a fine leap, to hurry you down the stream; or such a delicate steeple i' the town, as Bow, to vault from; or a braver height, as Paul's; or if you affected to do it nearer home, and a shorter way, an excellent garret window into the street; or a beam in the said garret, with this halter (*he shows him a halter*), which they have sent, and desire that you would sooner commit

your grave head to this knot, than to the wedlock noose; or take a little sublimate, and go out of the world like a rat, or a fly (as one said) with a straw i' your arse: any way, rather than to follow this goblin matrimony. Alas, sir, do you ever think to find a chaste wife, in these times? Now? When there are so many masques, plays, puritan preachings, mad folks, and other strange sights to be seen daily, private and public? If you had lived in King Etheldred's time, sir, or Edward the Confessor's, you might, perhaps, have found in some cold country hamlet, then, a dull frosty wench would have been contented with one man; now, they will as soon be pleased with one leg, or one eye. I'll tell you, sir, the monstrous hazards you shall run with a wife.

MOROSE Good sir! Have I ever cozened any friends of yours of their land? Bought their possessions? Taken forfeit of their mortgage? Begged a reversion from 'em? Bastarded their issue? What have I done, that may deserve this? 50

TRUEWIT Nothing, sir, that I know, but your itch of marriage.

MOROSE Why, if I had made an assassinate upon your father, vitiated your mother, ravished your sisters—

TRUEWIT I would kill you, sir, I would kill you, if you had.

MOROSE Why, you do more in this, sir: it were a vengeance centuple for all facinorous acts that could be named, to do that you do— 59

TRUEWIT Alas, sir, I am but a messenger: I but tell you what you must hear. It seems your friends are careful after your soul's health, sir, and would have you know the danger (but you may do your pleasure for all them, I persuade not, sir). If, after you are married, your wife do run away with a vaulter, or the Frenchman that walks upon ropes, or him that dances the jig, or a fencer for his skill at his weapon, why, it is not their fault; they have discharged their consciences when you know what may happen. Nay,

3 Fishes: i.e. as dumb as fishes

Pythagoreans: an ascetic brotherhood, following the philosophy of the 6th-century BC Greek philosopher, Pythagoras. On joining the sect, a vow of silence was taken (to last for five years) for the purpose of self-examination

4 Harpocrates: god of silence; the club was, through a confusion, acquired from Hercules

6-7 venture upon: hazard an approach to

9 Oh men! Oh manners!: echo of Cicero's exclamation in *In Catilinam*, I.2, '*O tempora, O mores*' (O times! O manners!)

10 impudence: shamelessness

13 compeer: equal

18-45, 119-51 much of Truewit's diatribe against women and marriage is adapted from Juvenal's *Satires*, VI

20 companion: fellow (contemptuous)

23 fall: ebb-tide

25 Bow: St Mary-le-Bow, in Cheapside

26 braver: more splendid

Paul's: the old St Paul's Cathedral, later destroyed by fire in 1666

32 sublimate: mercuric chloride, used as rat poison

33-4 fly . . . arse: in spider and fly fights, a popular pastime, a straw was thrust into the fly's tail

37 mad folks: Bedlam (derivative of Bethlehem) hospital for the insane was visited for entertainment

39 Etheldred: Ethelred the Unready (978-1016), the father of Edward the Confessor (1042-66)

46 cozened: cheated

48 reversion from: right of succession to an estate or office away from

49 Bastarded: rendered illegitimate

51 itch of: hankering after

53 made . . . upon: murdered

54 vitiated: corrupted

58 facinorous: wicked, criminal

65-7 vaulter . . . jig . . . weapon: with sexual innuendoes

suffer valiantly, sir, for I must tell you all the perils that you are obnoxious to. If she be fair, young, and vegetous, no sweetmeats ever drew more flies; all the yellow doublets and great roses i' the town will be there. If foul, and crooked, she'll be with them and buy those doublets and roses, sir. If rich and that you marry her dowry, not her, she'll reign in your house as imperious as a widow. If noble, all her kindred will be your tyrants. If fruitful, as proud as May, and humorous as April; she must have her doctors, her midwives, her nurses, her longings every hour, though it be for the dearest morsel of man. If learned, there was never such a parrot; all your patrimony will be too little for the guests that must be invited to hear her speak Latin and Greek; and you must lie with her in those languages too, if you will please her. If precise, you must feast all the silenced brethren, once in three days; salute the sisters; entertain the whole family or wood of 'em; and hear long-winded exercises, singings, and catechizings, which you are not given to, and yet must give for, to please the zealous matron your wife, who, for the holy cause, will cozen you over and above. You begin to sweat, sir? But this is not half, i' faith; you may do your pleasure notwithstanding, as I said before, I come not to persuade you. (*The MUTE is stealing away*) Upon my faith, master servingman, if you do stir, I will beat you. 97

MOROSE Oh, what is my sin, what is my sin?

TRUEWIT Then, if you love your wife, or rather dote on her, sir, oh, how she'll torture you, and take pleasure i' your torments! You shall lie with her but when she lists; she will not hurt her beauty, her complexion; or it must be for that jewel, or that pearl, when she does; every half hour's pleasure must be bought anew, and with the same pain and charge you wooed her at first. Then, you must keep what servants she please;

71 obnoxious: liable

72 vegetous: lively

73 roses: rosettes decorating the shoe

74-5 be . . . buy: 'seek their company and pay for' (Holdsworth)

78 proud: a) arrogant; b) spirited; c) lascivious  
humorous: capricious

82 parrot: see, for example, the learned Lady Wouldbe, wife of Sir Pol, in Jonson's *Volpone* (1606)

86 precise: puritanical

87 silenced brethren: Puritan clergy who lost their licences to preach in 1604, after the Hampton Court conference, which was convened to try to settle points of dispute between the Church party and the Puritans; see Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) III.i.38

88 wood: crowd (from Latin *silva*, crowd or collection); punning on 'wood' meaning 'mad'

89 exercises: religious devotions

105 charge: expense

what company she will; that friend must not visit you without her licence; and him she loves most she will seem to hate eagerliest, to decline your jealousy; or feign to be jealous of you first, and for that cause go live with her she-friend, or cousin at the college, that can instruct her in all the mysteries of writing letters, corrupting servants, taming spies; where she must have that rich gown for such a great day; a new one for the next; a richer for the third; be served in silver; have the chamber filled with a succession of grooms, footmen, ushers, and other messengers, besides embroiderers, jewellers, tire-women, sempsters, feathermen, perfumers; while she feels not how the land drops away, nor the acres melt, nor foresees the change, when the mercer has your woods for her velvets; never weighs what her pride costs, sir, so she may kiss a page or a smooth chin that has the despair of a beard; be a stateswoman, know all the news, what was done at Salisbury, what at the Bath, what at court, what in progress; or so she may censure poets, and authors, and styles, and compare 'em, Daniel with Spenser, Jonson with the tother youth, and so forth; or be thought cunning in controversies, or the very knots of divinity; and have often in her mouth the state of the question, and then skip to the mathematics and demonstration, and answer in religion to one, in state to another, in bawdry to a third. 134

109 eagerliest: most fiercely

decline: avert

111 she-friend, or cousin: 'both terms could mean "mistress" or "strumpet", and cousin was also a euphemism for lover' (Holdsworth)

118 tire-women: dressmakers

sempsters: tailors (male or female)

119 feathermen: sellers of feathers (such as Tiltyard in *The Roaring Girl*)

121 mercer: dealer in costly fabrics

122 so: as long as

124 stateswoman: 'pretender to knowledge of affairs of state' (Procter)

125 Salisbury: where fashionable race-meetings were held

Bath: fashionable for its medicinal baths

progress: monarch's state visit to different regions of the kingdom

126 censure: judge

127-8 Daniel with Spenser: Samuel Daniel was an

Elizabethan poet sometimes compared with Edmund Spenser by his contemporaries; Jonson himself did so, to the detriment of Daniel; see Herford and Simpson I.132  
tother youth: most eds take this to be Shakespeare, though other suggestions have been Samuel Daniel, Thomas Dekker, or John Marston

129 cunning: skilful

130 knots: intricate problems

131 state: main issue

133 state: politics



MOROSE Oh, oh!

TRUEWIT All this is very true, sir. And then her going in disguise to that conjuror, and this cunning woman: where the first question is, how soon you shall die? Next, if her present servant love her? Next that, if she shall have a new servant? And how many? Which of her family would make the best bawd, male or female? What precedence she shall have by her next match? And sets down the answers, and believes 'em above the scriptures. Nay, perhaps she'll study the art.

MOROSE Gentle sir, ha' you done? Ha' you had your pleasure o' me? I'll think of these things. <sup>145</sup>

TRUEWIT Yes, sir; and then comes reeking home of vapour and sweat with going afoot, and lies in a month of a new face, all oil and birdlime; and rises in asses' milk, and is cleansed with a new fucus. God b'w'you, sir. One thing more (which I had almost forgot). This too, with whom you are to marry, may have made a conveyance of her virginity aforehand, as your wise widows do of their states, before they marry, in trust to some friend, sir: who can tell? Or if she have not done it yet, she may do, upon the wedding day, or the night before, and antedate you cuckold. The like has been heard of, in nature. 'Tis no devised, impossible thing, sir. God b'w'you. I'll be bold to leave this rope with you, sir, for a remembrance. Farewell, Mute. *Exit*

MOROSE Come, ha' me to my chamber; but first shut the door. (*The horn again*) Oh, shut the door, shut the door. Is he come again? <sup>165</sup>

*Enter CUTBEARD*

CUTBEARD 'Tis I, sir, your barber.

MOROSE Oh, Cutbeard, Cutbeard, Cutbeard! Here has

been a cut-throat with me: help me in to my bed, and give me physic with thy counsel.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene iii

*Enter DAW, CLERIMONT, DAUPHINE, EPICOENE*

DAW Nay, and she will, let her refuse at her own charges; 'tis nothing to me, gentlemen. But she will not be invited to the like feasts or guests every day.

CLERIMONT Oh, by no means, she may not refuse— (*they dissuade her privately*) to stay at home if you love your reputation. 'Slight, you are invited thither o' purpose to be seen, and laughed at by the lady of the college, and her shadows. This trumpeter hath proclaimed you. <sup>9</sup>

DAUPHINE You shall not go; let him be laughed at in your stead, for not bringing you; and put him to his extemporal faculty of fooling, and talking loud to satisfy the company.

CLERIMONT He will suspect us, talk aloud.—Pray, Mistress Epicoene, let's see your verse; we have Sir John Daw's leave: do not conceal your servant's merit and your own glories.

EPICOENE They'll prove my servant's glories, if you have his leave so soon. <sup>19</sup>

DAUPHINE (*Aside to EPICOENE*) His vainglories, lady!

DAW Show 'em, show 'em, mistress, I dare own 'em.

EPICOENE Judge you what glories!

DAW Nay, I'll read 'em myself too: an author must recite his own works. It is a madrigal of modesty.

'Modest and fair, for fair and good are near  
Neighbours, howe'er —'

DAUPHINE Very good.

CLERIMONT Ay, is't not?

DAW 'No noble virtue ever was alone  
But two in one.'

DAUPHINE Excellent! <sup>30</sup>

CLERIMONT That again, I pray, Sir John.

DAUPHINE It has something in't like rare wit, and sense.

CLERIMONT Peace.

DAW 'No noble virtue ever was alone

137 conjuror: astrologer  
cunning woman: wise woman, fortune-teller

139 servant: lover

142 precedence: 'right of preceding others at formal social occasions' (Holdsworth)

145 art: i.e. fortune-telling

148 reeking: steaming (from exertion)

149 lies in: is in labour (as in childbirth)

150 birdlime: sticky substance used to snare birds; here, used of cosmetic ingredient

rises: some eds emend to 'rinses', on the basis that this is closer to the sense in Juvenal; most, however, agree that 'rises' is as suggestive, and has the advantage of introducing an ironic parallel with 'lies in'

151 fucus: cosmetic face-wash

154 conveyance: legal transfer of property from one person to another (in this example, to prevent it becoming the property of the new husband)

155 states: estates

156 friend: lover

160 devised: contrived

169 give me physic: many barbers were also surgeons and medical practitioners

1 and: if

2 charges: cost

8 shadows: parasites, toadies

This trumpeter: i.e. Daw

12 fooling: acting foolishly

17 glories: a) triumphs; b) boasts (Holdsworth)

24 madrigal: love lyric

25–40 Daw's lyric comprises Renaissance platitudes; compare Pierre Charron's *Of Wisdom*, trans. S. Lennard (1612) and Anon., *England's Parnassus* (1600) (eds)

33 rare: pun on a) fine, and b) infrequent; see I.iv.28n

But two in one.  
 Then, when I praise sweet modesty, I praise  
 Bright beauty's rays:  
 And having praised both beauty' and modesty,  
 I have praised thee.' 40  
 DAUPHINE Admirable!  
 CLERIMONT How it chimes, and cries tink i' the close,  
 divinely!  
 DAUPHINE Ay, 'tis Seneca.  
 CLERIMONT No, I think 'tis Plutarch.  
 DAW The dor on Plutarch, and Seneca, I hate it: they  
 are mine own imaginations, by that light. I wonder  
 those fellows have such credit with gentlemen!  
 CLERIMONT They are very grave authors. 49  
 DAW Grave asses! Mere essayists! A few loose  
 sentences, and that's all. A man would talk so his  
 whole age; I do utter as good things every hour, if  
 they were collected and observed, as either of 'em.  
 DAUPHINE Indeed, Sir John!  
 CLERIMONT He must needs, living among the Wits  
 and Braveries too.  
 DAUPHINE Ay, and being president of 'em as he is.  
 DAW There's Aristotle, a mere commonplace fellow;  
 Plato, a discourser; Thucydides and Livy, tedious and  
 dry; Tacitus, an entire knot, sometimes worth the  
 untying, very seldom. 61  
 CLERIMONT What do you think of the poets, Sir John?  
 DAW Not worthy to be named for authors. Homer, an  
 old tedious prolix ass, talks of curriers, and chines of

39 beauty': the apostrophe indicates the elision of the second syllable  
 42 chimes: jingles  
 cries tink: tinkles  
 close: conclusion of a musical phrase  
 46 The dor on: a scoff: i.e. 'a fig for' (with a pun on his own name)  
 Plutarch, and Seneca: see I.i.67-8n  
 50 essayists: Jonson himself had a low opinion of essayists; see his *Timber, or Discoveries* (1640) 719ff  
 sentences: maxims  
 58-61 Aristotle . . . seldom: Partridge notes that, ironically, Daw's comments are true in ways of which he himself is unaware; see pp. 181-2 of his edition  
 58 commonplace: trivial; but also, through Latin *locus communis*, a universal truth  
 59 discourser: talker (pejoratively); but also a writer, like Plato, of discourses  
 Thucydides: c. 460-c. 400 BC; greatest Greek historian  
 Livy: 59 BC-AD 17; Roman historian. His name suggests 'livid' (Latin *livido*), blue or black, the colour of melancholy, the dry humour (Partridge)  
 60 Tacitus: c. AD 55-c. 117; Roman historian. His name means 'secret, hidden'  
 64 curriers: groomers of horses  
 chines: backbones. In *The Iliad*, VII.321, Ajax is given the whole chine of an ox by Agamemnon

beef; Virgil, of dunging of land, and bees; Horace, of I know not what.  
 CLERIMONT I think so.  
 DAW And so Pindarus, Lycophron, Anacreon,  
 Catullus, Seneca the tragedian, Lucan, Propertius,  
 Tibullus, Martial, Juvenal, Ausonius, Statius,  
 Politian, Valerius Flaccus, and the rest— 71  
 CLERIMONT What a sackful of their names he has got!  
 DAUPHINE And how he pours 'em out! Politian with  
 Valerius Flaccus!  
 CLERIMONT Was not the character right of him?  
 DAUPHINE As could be made, i' faith.  
 DAW And Persius, a crabbed coxcomb, not to be  
 endured.  
 DAUPHINE Why, whom do you account for authors, Sir  
 John Daw? 80  
 DAW *Syntagma juris civilis, Corpus juris civilis, Corpus  
 juris canonici*, the King of Spain's Bible.  
 DAUPHINE Is the King of Spain's Bible an author?  
 CLERIMONT Yes, and *Syntagma*.  
 DAUPHINE What was that *Syntagma*, sir?  
 DAW A civil lawyer, a Spaniard.  
 DAUPHINE Sure, *Corpus* was a Dutchman.  
 CLERIMONT Ay, both the Corpuses, I knew 'em: they  
 were very corpulent authors.  
 DAW And then there's Vatablus, Pomponatius,  
 Symancha; the other are not to be received within the  
 thought of a scholar. 92  
 DAUPHINE 'Fore God, you have a simple learned  
 servant, lady, in titles.  
 CLERIMONT I wonder that he is not called to the helm,  
 and made a councillor!  
 DAUPHINE He is one extraordinary.  
 CLERIMONT Nay, but in ordinary! To say truth, the  
 state wants such.  
 DAUPHINE Why, that will follow. 100

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65 dunging . . . bees: reference to Virgil's poem on agriculture and animal husbandry, *The Georgics*, I.79-81 and IV  
 68-71 Pindarus . . . the rest: a random jumble of major and more obscure Greek and Latin poets, together with an Italian humanist (Politian)  
 75 character: character sketch (at I.ii.72-91)  
 81-2 *Syntagma* . . . Bible: titles of books that Daw takes to be authors' names. The first two titles are the same book, collections of Roman law; the third is the collection of canon law; the fourth the polyglot Bible sponsored by Philip II of Spain  
 87 Dutchman: the English thought of the Dutch as fat, owing to their liking of butter and alcohol  
 90-1 Vatablus, Pomponatius, Symancha: minor sixteenth-century scholars  
 93 simple: absolutely (with pun)  
 97 extraordinary: outside the regular staff (with pun)  
 98 in ordinary: full-time (with pun on 'undistinguished')  
 99 wants: requires (with pun on 'lacks')

CLERIMONT I muse a mistress can be so silent to the dotes of such a servant.  
 DAW 'Tis her virtue, sir. I have written somewhat of her silence too.  
 DAUPHINE In verse, Sir John?  
 CLERIMONT What else?  
 DAUPHINE Why, how can you justify your own being of a poet, that so slight all the old poets?  
 DAW Why, every man that writes in verse is not a poet; you have of the Wits that write verses, and yet are no poets: they are poets that live by it, the poor fellows that live by it. **112**  
 DAUPHINE Why, would not you live by your verses, Sir John?  
 CLERIMONT No, 'twere pity he should. A knight live by his verses? He did not make 'em to that end, I hope.  
 DAUPHINE And yet the noble Sidney lives by his, and the noble family not ashamed.  
 CLERIMONT Ay, he professed himself; but Sir John Daw has more caution: he'll not hinder his own rising i' the state so much! Do you think he will? Your verses, good Sir John, and no poems. **122**  
 DAW 'Silence in woman is like speech in man, Deny't who can.'  
 DAUPHINE Not I, believe it; your reason, sir.  
 DAW 'Nor is't a tale  
 That female vice should be a virtue male,  
 Or masculine vice, a female virtue be:  
 You shall it see  
 Proved with increase, **130**  
 I know to speak, and she to hold her peace.'  
 Do you conceive me, gentlemen?  
 DAUPHINE No, faith; how mean you 'with increase', Sir John?  
 DAW Why, 'with increase' is when I court her for the common cause of mankind; and she says nothing, but *consentire videtur*: and in time is *gravida*.  
 DAUPHINE Then this is a ballad of procreation?  
 CLERIMONT A madrigal of procreation; you mistake.  
 EPICOENE Pray give me my verses again, servant. **140**  
 DAW If you'll ask 'em aloud, you shall.

102 dotes: natural endowments; also, follies  
 113 live by: earn their living by; not considered appropriate behaviour for a gentleman. Dauphine then alludes to the other meaning: 'gain immortality by'  
 117 Sidney: Sir Philip Sidney (1554–86), soldier and scholar. Author of *Arcadia* (1590), *Astrophil and Stella* (1591) and *An Apology for Poetry* (1595). His works (published posthumously by his sister, the Countess of Pembroke) were highly influential  
 119 professed: declared  
 132 conceive: understand (with pun on procreation)  
 136 common cause of mankind: 'procreation' (Procter)  
 137 *consentire videtur*: she seems to consent  
*gravida*: pregnant

*Walks apart with EPICOENE*

CLERIMONT See, here's Truewit again!

## Act II, scene iv

*Enter TRUEWIT with his post-horn*

CLERIMONT Where hast thou been, in the name of madness, thus accoutred with thy horn?  
 TRUEWIT Where the sound of it might have pierced your senses with gladness had you been in ear-reach of it. Dauphine, fall down and worship me: I have forbid the banns, lad. I have been with thy virtuous uncle and have broke the match.  
 DAUPHINE You ha' not, I hope. **8**  
 TRUEWIT Yes, faith; and thou shouldst hope otherwise, I should repent me; this horn got me entrance, kiss it. I had no other way to get in, but by feigning to be a post; but when I got in once, I proved none, but rather the contrary, turned him into a post, or a stone, or what is stiffer, with thund'ring into him the incommodities of a wife, and the miseries of marriage. If ever Gorgon were seen in the shape of a woman, he hath seen her in my description. I have put him off o' that scent forever. Why do you not applaud, and adore me, sirs? Why stand you mute? Are you stupid? You are not worthy o' the benefit. **20**  
 DAUPHINE Did not I tell you? Mischief!—  
 CLERIMONT I would you had placed this benefit somewhere else.  
 TRUEWIT Why so?  
 CLERIMONT 'Slight, you have done the most inconsiderate, rash, weak thing that ever man did to his friend.  
 DAUPHINE Friend! If the most malicious enemy I have had studied to inflict an injury upon me, it could not be a greater. **30**  
 TRUEWIT Wherein, for God's sake? Gentlemen, come to yourselves again.  
 DAUPHINE But I presaged thus much afore to you.  
 CLERIMONT Would my lips had been soldered, when I spake on't. 'Slight, what moved you to be thus impertinent?  
 TRUEWIT My masters, do not put on this strange face to pay my courtesy: off with this visor. Have good turns done you and thank 'em this way? **39**

6 forbid the banns: formally objected to the proposed marriage  
 12 post: messenger  
 none: i.e. not a post (or block of wood, and thus silent)  
 15 incommodities: disadvantages  
 16 Gorgon: one of three female monsters of Greek myth whose gaze turned people to stone  
 20 stupid: stupefied; also, slow-witted  
 33 presaged: gave warning of (see I.iii.1–11)

DAUPHINE 'Fore heav'n, you have undone me. That which I have plotted for, and been maturing now these four months, you have blasted in a minute; now I am lost, I may speak. This gentlewoman was lodged here by me o' purpose, and, to be put upon my uncle, hath professed this obstinate silence for my sake, being my entire friend; and one that for the requital of such a fortune as to marry him, would have made me very ample conditions; where now all my hopes are utterly miscarried by this unlucky accident. 49

CLERIMONT Thus 'tis when a man will be ignorantly officious; do services and not know his why; I wonder what courteous itch possessed you! You never did absurder part i' your life, nor a greater trespass to friendship, to humanity.

DAUPHINE Faith, you may forgive it best: 'twas your cause principally.

CLERIMONT I know it; would it had not.

*Enter CUTBEARD*

DAUPHINE How now, Cutbeard, what news? 58  
CUTBEARD The best, the happiest that ever was, sir.

There has been a mad gentleman with your uncle this morning—(*seeing TRUEWIT*) I think this be the gentleman—that has almost talked him out of his wits, with threat'ning him from marriage—

DAUPHINE On, I pray thee.

CUTBEARD And your uncle, sir, he thinks 'twas done by your procurement; therefore he will see the party you wot of, presently; and if he like her, he says, and that she be so inclining to dumb as I have told him, he swears he will marry her today, instantly, and not defer it a minute longer. 70

DAUPHINE Excellent! Beyond our expectation!

TRUEWIT Beyond your expectation? By this light, I knew it would be thus.

DAUPHINE Nay, sweet Truewit, forgive me.

TRUEWIT No, I was 'ignorantly officious, impertinent'; this was the 'absurd, weak part'.

CLERIMONT Wilt thou ascribe that to merit now, was mere fortune?

TRUEWIT Fortune? Mere providence. Fortune had not a finger in't. I saw it must necessarily in nature fall

out so: my genius is never false to me in these things. Show me how it could be otherwise. 82

DAUPHINE Nay, gentlemen, contend not; 'tis well now.

TRUEWIT Alas, I let him go on with 'inconsiderate', and 'rash', and what he pleased.

CLERIMONT Away, thou strange justifier of thyself, to be wiser than thou wert by the event.

TRUEWIT Event! By this light, thou shalt never persuade me but I foresaw it as well as the stars themselves. 90

DAUPHINE Nay, gentlemen, 'tis well now; do you two entertain Sir John Daw with discourse while I send her away with instructions.

TRUEWIT I'll be acquainted with her first, by your favour. *They approach* EPICOENE and DAW

CLERIMONT Master Truewit, lady, a friend of ours.

TRUEWIT I am sorry I have not known you sooner, lady, to celebrate this rare virtue of your silence.

CLERIMONT Faith, an' you had come sooner, you should ha' seen and heard her well celebrated in Sir John Daw's madrigals. 101

*Exeunt* DAUPHINE, EPICOENE, and CUTBEARD

TRUEWIT Jack Daw, God save you; when saw you La Foole?

DAW Not since last night, Master Truewit.

TRUEWIT That's miracle! I thought you two had been inseparable.

DAW He's gone to invite his guests.

TRUEWIT Gods so, 'tis true! What a false memory have I towards that man! I am one: I met him e'en now, upon that he calls his delicate fine black horse, rid into a foam with posting from place to place, and person to person, to give 'em the cue— 112

CLERIMONT Lest they should forget?

TRUEWIT Yes; there was never poor captain took more pains at a muster to show men, than he at this meal to show friends.

DAW It is his quarter-feast, sir.

CLERIMONT What! Do you say so, Sir John?

TRUEWIT Nay, Jack Daw will not be out, at the best friends he has, to the talent of his wit. Where's his mistress, to hear and applaud him? Is she gone? 121

DAW Is Mistress Epicoene gone?

CLERIMONT Gone afore with Sir Dauphine, I warrant, to the place.

42-3 now . . . speak: proverbial

44 put upon: a) imposed on; b) trick

46-7 for the requital of: in return for

48 conditions: provision

52 did: played

56 cause: fault

67 wot: know

presently: immediately

77 was: which was

79 Mere: sheer

providence: foresight

81 genius: attendant spirit

87 event: outcome

110 delicate: exquisite

117 quarter-feast: 'feast given every quarter-day when La Foole's rents have been paid in; or feast given every quarter sessions, during the town's social season' (Procter)

119-20 out . . . wit: 'lose his jest which reveals the natural capacity of his wit to the full, even at the expense of his best friends' (Procter)

TRUEWIT Gone afore! That were a manifest injury, a disgrace and a half, to refuse him at such a festival time as this, being a Bravery, and a Wit too.

CLERIMONT Tut, he'll swallow it like cream: he's better read in *jure civili* than to esteem anything a disgrace is offered him from a mistress. **130**

DAW Nay, let her e'en go; she shall sit alone, and be dumb in her chamber a week together, for Sir John Daw, I warrant her. Does she refuse me?

CLERIMONT No, sir, do not take it so to heart: she does not refuse you, but a little neglect you. Good faith, Truewit, you were to blame to put it into his head that she does refuse him.

TRUEWIT She does refuse him, sir, palpably, however you mince it. An' I were as he, I would swear to speak ne'er a word to her today for't. **140**

DAW By this light, no more I will not.

TRUEWIT Nor to anybody else, sir.

DAW Nay, I will not say so, gentlemen.

CLERIMONT (*Aside to TRUEWIT*) It had been an excellent happy condition for the company, if you could have drawn him to it.

DAW I'll be very melancholic, i' faith.

CLERIMONT As a dog, if I were as you, Sir John.

TRUEWIT Or a snail, or a hog-louse: I would roll myself up for this day, in troth, they should not unwind me. **150**

DAW By this picktooth, so I will.

CLERIMONT (*Aside to TRUEWIT*) 'Tis well done: he begins already to be angry with his teeth.

DAW Will you go, gentlemen?

CLERIMONT Nay, you must walk alone if you be right melancholic, Sir John.

TRUEWIT Yes, sir, we'll follow you afar off. *Exit DAW*

CLERIMONT Was there ever such a two yards of knighthood, measured out by time, to be sold to laughter? **162**

TRUEWIT A mere talking mole! Hang him, no mushroom was ever so fresh. A fellow so utterly nothing, as he knows not what he would be.

CLERIMONT Let's follow him; but first let's go to Dauphine; he's hovering about the house to hear what news.

TRUEWIT Content.

*Exeunt*

129 *jure civili*: civil law (see II.iii.81)  
 132–3 for Sir John Daw: for all Sir John Daw cares  
 139 mince: minimise  
 148 dog: proverbially melancholy; also, a term of abuse  
 149 hog-louse: wood-louse  
 152 picktooth: toothpick; a fashionable accessory  
 163 mere: absolute  
     mole: proverbially blind  
 164 mushroom: upstart

## Act II, scene v

*Enter MOROSE, EPICOENE, CUTBEARD, MUTE*

MOROSE Welcome, Cutbeard; draw near with your fair charge; and in her ear softly entreat her to unmask. (EPICOENE *unmasks*) So. Is the door shut? (MUTE *makes a leg*) Enough. Now, Cutbeard, with the same discipline I use to my family, I will question you. As I conceive, Cutbeard, this gentlewoman is she you have provided, and brought, in hope she will fit me in the place and person of a wife? Answer me not but with your leg, unless it be otherwise.—Very well done, Cutbeard. I conceive besides, Cutbeard, you have been pre-acquainted with her birth, education, and qualities, or else you would not prefer her to my acceptance, in the weighty consequence of marriage.—This I conceive, Cutbeard. Answer me not but with your leg, unless it be otherwise.—Very well done, Cutbeard. Give aside now a little, and leave me to examine her condition and aptitude to my affection. (*He goes about her and views her*) She is exceeding fair, and of a special good favour; a sweet composition or harmony of limbs; her temper of beauty has the true height of my blood. The knave hath exceedingly well fitted me without: I will now try her within.—Come near, fair gentlewoman; let not my behaviour seem rude, though unto you, being rare, it may haply appear strange. (*She curtsies*) Nay, lady, you may speak, though Cutbeard, and my man, might not: for of all sounds, only the sweet voice of a fair lady has the just length of mine ears. I beseech you, say, lady, out of the first fire of meeting eyes (they say) love is stricken: do you feel any such motion, suddenly shot into you, from any part you see in me? Ha, lady? (*Curtsy*) Alas, lady, these answers by silent curtsies from you are too courtless and simple. I have ever had my breeding in court; and she that shall be my wife must be accomplished with courtly and audacious ornaments. Can you speak, lady? EPICOENE (*She speaks softly*) Judge you, forsooth. **36**

MOROSE What say you, lady? Speak out, I beseech you.

EPICOENE Judge you, forsooth.

MOROSE O' my judgement, a divine softness! But can

5 family: household  
 12 prefer: recommend  
 17 condition: disposition  
 19 favour: beauty  
 20 her temper . . . blood: i.e. her kind of beauty suits my passions exactly  
 21 without: in external appearance  
 22 try her within: test her character (with sexual innuendo)  
 24 rare: of uncommon excellence  
 27 just length of: 'exact attunement to' (Procter)  
 30 motion: emotion (with innuendo)  
 32 courtless: uncourtly  
 35 audacious: spirited; but also suggesting 'shameless'

you naturally, lady, as I enjoin these by doctrine and industry, refer yourself to the search of my judgement, and (not taking pleasure in your tongue, which is a woman's chiefest pleasure) think it plausible to answer me by silent gestures, so long as my speeches jump right with what you conceive? (*Curtsy*) Excellent! Divine! If it were possible she should hold out thus! Peace, Cutbeard, thou art made forever, as thou hast made me, if this felicity have lasting; but I will try her further. Dear lady, I am courtly, I tell you, and I must have mine ears banqueted with pleasant and witty conferences, pretty girds, scoffs, and dalliance in her that I mean to choose for my bed-fere. The ladies in court think it a most desperate impair to their quickness of wit and good carriage, if they cannot give occasion for a man to court 'em, and when an amorous discourse is set on foot, minister as good matter to continue it as himself; and do you alone so much differ from all them, that what they (with so much circumstance) affect, and toil for, to seem learned, to seem judicious, to seem sharp, and conceited, you can bury in yourself, with silence, and rather trust your graces to the fair conscience of virtue, than to the world's or your own proclamation? **64**

EPICOENE I should be sorry else.

MOROSE What say you, lady? Good lady, speak out.

EPICOENE I should be sorry, else.

MOROSE That sorrow doth fill me with gladness! Oh, Morose! Thou art happy above mankind! Pray that thou mayst contain thyself. I will only put her to it once more, and it shall be with the utmost touch and test of their sex.—But hear me, fair lady, I do also love to see her whom I shall choose for my heifer to be the first and principal in all fashions; precede all the dames at court, by a fortnight; have her council of tailors, lineners, lace-women, embroiderers, and sit with 'em sometimes twice a day, upon French

intelligences; and then come forth varied like Nature, or off'ner than she, and better, by the help of Art, her emulous servant. This do I affect. And how will you be able, lady, with this frugality of speech, to give the manifold (but necessary) instructions for that bodice, these sleeves, those skirts, this cut, that stitch, this embroidery, that lace, this wire, those knots, that ruff, those roses, this girdle, that fan, the tother scarf, these gloves? Ha? What say you, lady? **86**

EPICOENE I'll leave it to you, sir.

MOROSE How, lady? Pray you, rise a note.

EPICOENE I leave it to wisdom, and you, sir.

MOROSE Admirable creature! I will trouble you no more; I will not sin against so sweet a simplicity. Let me now be bold to print, on those divine lips, the seal of being mine. (*Kisses her*) Cutbeard, I give thee the lease of thy house free; thank me not, but with thy leg.—I know what thou wouldst say, she's poor, and her friends deceased: she has brought a wealthy dowry in her silence, Cutbeard; and in respect of her poverty, Cutbeard, I shall have her more loving, and obedient, Cutbeard. Go thy ways, and get me a minister presently, with a soft, low voice, to marry us, and pray him he will not be impertinent, but brief as he can; away; softly, Cutbeard. (*Exit CUTBEARD*) Sirrah, conduct your mistress into the dining room, your now-mistress. (*Exeunt MUTE and EPICOENE*) Oh my felicity! How I shall be revenged on mine insolent kinsman, and his plots to fright me from marrying! This night I will get an heir, and thrust him out of my blood like a stranger. He would be knighted, forsooth, and thought by that means to reign over me, his title must do it: no, kinsman, I will now make you bring me the tenth lord's and the sixteenth lady's letter, kinsman; and it shall do you no good, kinsman. Your knighthood itself shall come on its knees, and it shall be rejected; it shall be sued for its fees to execution, and not be redeemed; it shall cheat at the twelvepenny ordinary, it knighthood, for its diet all the term time, and tell tales

40 these: i.e. Cutbeard and Mute  
doctrine: instruction

44 plausible: agreeable

45 jump right: tally

52 girds: gibes

53 bed-fere: bedfellow

54 impair: injury

55 carriage: behaviour

59 circumstance: ado

60 affect: aim at

61 conceited: witty

63 conscience: inward knowledge

69 happy: fortunate

71 touch: trial

73 heifer: bride (literally, a cow that has not yet calved); see Judges 14.18: 'And he said unto them, If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle'

76 lineners: drapers

77–8 French intelligences: news from France (of the latest fashions)

80 affect: like

83 cut: decorative slash in sleeve to reveal lining beneath

84 wire: to support hair or ruff  
knots: bows

85 roses: see II.ii.73n

100 presently: immediately

101 impertinent: irrelevant

111 letter: i.e. of commendation

114 to execution: 'as far as seizure by writ of possession (for debt)' (Procter)

115 twelvepenny ordinary: one of the more expensive eating-houses

it: archaic form of its or his, used in baby talk; in this passage, used contemptuously

for it in the vacation, to the hostess; or it knighthood shall do worse, take sanctuary in Coleharbour, and fast. It shall fright all it friends with borrowing letters; and when one of the fourscore hath brought it knighthood ten shillings, it knighthood shall go to the Cranes, or the Bear at the Bridgefoot, and be drunk in fear; it shall not have money to discharge one tavern reckoning, to invite the old creditors to forbear it knighthood, or the new that should be, to trust it knighthood. It shall be the tenth name in the bond, to take up the commodity of pipkins and stone jugs; and the part thereof shall not furnish it knighthood forth for the attempting of a baker's widow, a brown baker's widow. It shall give it knighthood's name for a stallion to all gamesome citizens' wives, and be refused, when the master of a dancing school or (how do you call him?) the worst reveller in the town is taken; it shall want clothes, and by reason of that, wit, to fool to lawyers. It shall not have hope to repair itself by Constantinople, Ireland, or Virginia; but the best and last fortune to it knighthood shall be to make Dol Tearsheet, or Kate Common, a lady, and so it knighthood may eat.

139  
Exit

## Act II, scene vi

Enter TRUEWIT, DAUPHINE, CLERIMONT

TRUEWIT Are you sure he is not gone by?  
DAUPHINE No, I stayed in the shop ever since.  
CLERIMONT But he may take the other end of the lane.  
DAUPHINE No, I told him I would be here at this end;

- 118 Coleharbour: or Coldharborough, a seedy area that had become a sanctuary for debtors and vagrants  
119 borrowing: begging  
122 Cranes . . . Bear: the Three Cranes on Upper Thames Street, and the Bear at the southern end of London Bridge: popular taverns  
125 forbear: to abstain from enforcing the payment of money after it has become due  
126 tenth name: 'tenth man to be paid off (who therefore gets very little)' (Procter)  
127 commodity: worthless goods borrowers obliged to take as part of loan; see I.iv.74n  
pipkins: small earthenware jugs  
129 brown: a) coarse bread; b) dark-complexioned; both seen as inferior options  
132 how: pun on name of Edmund Howe, the public chronicler  
134 fool to: trick; Holdsworth suggests 'play the fool in front of'  
136 Constantinople, Ireland, or Virginia: places in which people tried to recoup lost fortunes or escape the law  
137-8 Dol Tearsheet, or Kate Common: prostitutes. Dol Tearsheet is in *2 Henry IV*; compare Dol Common in *The Alchemist*

I appointed him hither.  
TRUEWIT What a barbarian it is to stay then!

Enter CUTBEARD

DAUPHINE Yonder he comes.  
CLERIMONT And his charge left behind him, which is a very good sign, Dauphine.

DAUPHINE How now, Cutbeard, succeeds it, or no? 10

CUTBEARD Past imagination, sir, *omnia secunda*; you could not have prayed to have had it so well: *saltat senex*, as it is i' the proverb, he does triumph in his felicity; admires the party! He has given me the lease of my house too! And I am now going for a silent minister to marry 'em, and away.

TRUEWIT 'Slight, get one o' the silenced ministers, a zealous brother would torment him purely.

CUTBEARD *Cum privilegio*, sir.

DAUPHINE Oh, by no means; let's do nothing to hinder it now; when 'tis done and finished, I am for you, for any device of vexation. 22

CUTBEARD And that shall be within this half hour, upon my dexterity, gentlemen. Contrive what you can in the meantime, *bonis avibus*. Exit

CLERIMONT How the slave doth Latin it!

TRUEWIT It would be made a jest to posterity, sirs, this day's mirth, if ye will.

CLERIMONT Beshrew his heart that will not, I pronounce. 30

DAUPHINE And for my part. What is't?

TRUEWIT To translate all La Foole's company and his feast hither today to celebrate this bride-ale.

DAUPHINE Ay, marry, but how will't be done?

TRUEWIT I'll undertake the directing of all the lady guests thither, and then the meat must follow.

CLERIMONT For God's sake, let's effect it; it will be an excellent comedy of affliction, so many several noises.

DAUPHINE But are they not at the other place already, think you? 40

TRUEWIT I'll warrant you for the college-honours: one

- 5 appointed him hither: arranged to meet him here  
6 it: i.e. he

11-13 *omnia secunda* . . . *saltat senex*: Latin proverb: 'All's well; the old boy is cutting capers' (Herford and Simpson)

15-16 silenced ministers: see II.ii.87n

18 purely: perfectly; also, 'in the Puritan manner'

19 *Cum privilegio*: with authority

25 *bonis avibus*: the omens being favourable

26 Latin: since many barbers were also surgeons, such an affectation was not unlikely

32 translate: transfer

33 bride-ale: wedding feast

36 meat: food

38 several: different

39 the other place: i.e. Otter's house

41 I'll . . . for: I can guarantee you about college-honours: i.e. the collegiates (see III.iii.77)

o' their faces has not the priming colour laid on yet, nor the other her smock sleeked.  
 CLERIMONT Oh, but they'll rise earlier than ordinary to a feast.  
 TRUEWIT Best go see, and assure ourselves.  
 CLERIMONT Who knows the house?  
 TRUEWIT I'll lead you; were you never there yet?  
 DAUPHINE Not I.  
 CLERIMONT Nor I. 50  
 TRUEWIT Where ha' you lived then? Not know Tom Otter!  
 CLERIMONT No. For God's sake, what is he?  
 TRUEWIT An excellent animal, equal with your Daw or La Foole, if not transcendent; and does Latin it as much as your barber. He is his wife's subject, he calls her princess, and at such times as these, follows her up and down the house like a page, with his hat off, partly for heat, partly for reverence. At this instant, he is marshalling of his bull, bear, and horse. 60  
 DAUPHINE What be those, in the name of Sphinx?  
 TRUEWIT Why, sir, he has been a great man at the Bear Garden in his time; and from that subtle sport, has ta'en the witty denomination of his chief carousing cups. One he calls his bull, another his bear, another his horse. And then he has his lesser glasses, that he calls his deer, and his ape, and several degrees of 'em too; and never is well, nor thinks any entertainment perfect, till these be brought out, and set o' the cupboard. 70  
 CLERIMONT For God's love! We should miss this if we should not go.  
 TRUEWIT Nay, he has a thousand things as good, that will speak him all day. He will rail on his wife, with certain commonplaces, behind her back; and to her face—  
 DAUPHINE No more of him. Let's go see him, I petition you.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene i

*Enter* OTTER, MISTRESS OTTER. TRUEWIT, CLERIMONT, DAUPHINE *presently follow, unobserved*

OTTER Nay, good princess, hear me *pauca verba*.  
 MISTRESS OTTER By that light, I'll ha' you chained up with your bull-dogs and bear-dogs, if you be not civil

43 sleeked: ironed, smoothed  
 61 Sphinx: asker of riddles  
 63 Bear Garden: bear- and bull-baiting arena on Bankside, next to Paris Garden; see Introduction  
 65 cups: their lids were shaped like these animals' heads  
 68 degrees: sizes  
 74 speak: reveal things about  
 1 *pauca verba*: few words

the sooner. I'll send you to kennel, i' faith. You were best bait me with your bull, bear, and horse! Never a time that the courtiers or collegiates come to the house, but you make it a Shrove Tuesday! I would have you get your Whitsuntide velvet cap, and your staff i' your hand, to entertain 'em; yes, in troth, do.  
 OTTER Not so, princess, neither, but under correction, sweet princess, gi' me leave—these things I am known to the courtiers by. It is reported to them for my humour, and they receive it so, and do expect it. Tom Otter's bull, bear, and horse is known all over England, in *rerum natura*. 15  
 MISTRESS OTTER 'Fore me, I will 'na-ture' 'em over to Paris Garden and 'na-ture' you thither too, if you pronounce 'em again. Is a bear a fit beast, or a bull, to mix in society with great ladies? Think i' your discretion, in any good polity? 20  
 OTTER The horse then, good princess.  
 MISTRESS OTTER Well, I am contented for the horse: they love to be well horsed, I know. I love it myself.  
 OTTER And it is a delicate fine horse this. *Poetarum Pegasus*. Under correction, princess, Jupiter did turn himself into a—*taurus*, or bull, under correction, good princess. 27  
 MISTRESS OTTER By my integrity, I'll send you over to the Bankside, I'll commit you to the master of the Garden, if I hear but a syllable more. Must my house, or my roof, be polluted with the scent of bears, and bulls, when it is perfumed for great ladies? Is this according to the instrument, when I married you? That I would be princess, and reign in mine own house; and you would be my subject, and obey me? What did you bring me, should make you thus peremptory? Do I allow you your half-crown a day,

4-5 were best: had best  
 5 with: along with  
 7 Shrove Tuesday: see I.i.172n  
 8 velvet cap: worn for a holiday, such as Whitsun  
 10 under correction: subject to correction; used to suggest deference  
 13 humour: characteristic oddity; here an affectation of a humour, according to Jonson's own criteria (see Jonson, *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599), Induction, ll. 88-117)  
 15 *rerum natura*: here, 'the natural order of things'; more usually (as at III.ii.6) 'the world'  
 16 'Fore me: before me (a common asseveration)  
 20 discretion: judgement  
 good polity: well-ordered society  
 23 horsed: with sexual innuendo ('mount', 'ride')  
 24-5 *Poetarum Pegasus*: the poets' Pegasus  
 25-6 Jupiter . . . bull: Jupiter assumed the shape of a bull when he carried off Europa, with whom he was enamoured  
 33 instrument: formal legal agreement  
 37 peremptory: self-willed



to spend where you will among your gamesters, to vex and torment me at such times as these? Who gives you your maintenance, I pray you? Who allows you your horse-meat and man's meat? Your three suits of apparel a year? Your four pair of stockings, one silk, three worsted? Your clean linen, your bands, and cuffs when I can get you to wear 'em? 'Tis mar'l you ha' 'em on now. Who graces you with courtiers, or great personages, to speak to you out of their coaches, and come home to your house? Were you ever so much as looked upon by a lord, or a lady, before I married you, but on the Easter or Whitsun holidays, and then out at the Banqueting House window, when Ned Whiting, or George Stone, were at the stake? 52

TRUEWIT (*Aside*) For God's sake, let's go stave her off him.

MISTRESS OTTER Answer me to that. And did not I take you up from thence, in an old greasy buff-doublet, with points; and green velvet sleeves, out at the elbows? You forget this.

TRUEWIT (*Aside*) She'll worry him, if we help not in time. *They come forward*

MISTRESS OTTER Oh, here are some o' the gallants! Go to, behave yourself distinctly, and with good morality; or I protest, I'll take away your exhibition.

### Act III, scene ii

TRUEWIT By your leave, fair Mistress Otter, I'll be bold to enter these gentlemen in your acquaintance.

MISTRESS OTTER It shall not be obnoxious, or diffcil, sir.

TRUEWIT How does my noble captain? Is the bull, bear, and horse in *rerum natura* still?

OTTER Sir, *sic visum superis*.

41 horse-meat: horse fodder  
 41-2 three suits: a servant's allowance; see *King Lear* II.ii.14-15; III.iv.124-5  
 43 bands: collars  
 44 mar'l: marvel  
 50 Banqueting House: at Whitehall, where bull- and bear-baits were sometimes held  
 51 Ned Whiting, or George Stone: champion bears  
 53, 59 stave her off . . . worry: terms from bear-baiting  
 56-7 buff-doublet: leather jacket, as worn by ordinary soldiers  
 57 points: laces  
 62 distinctly, and with good morality: affected ways of saying 'well', 'properly'  
 63 exhibition: allowance  
 3 obnoxious, or diffcil: offensive or troublesome (affectedly)  
 6 *rerum natura*: see III.i.15n  
 7 *sic visum superis*: as those above decree

MISTRESS OTTER I would you would but intimate 'em, do. Go your ways in, and get toasts and butter made for the woodcocks. That's a fit province for you. 10

*Exit OTTER*

CLERIMONT (*Aside to TRUEWIT and DAUPHINE*) Alas, what a tyranny is this poor fellow married to!

TRUEWIT Oh, but the sport will be anon, when we get him loose.

DAUPHINE Dares he ever speak?

TRUEWIT No Anabaptist ever railed with the like licence: but mark her language in the meantime I beseech you.

MISTRESS OTTER Gentlemen, you are very aptly come. My cousin, Sir Amorous, will be here briefly. 20

TRUEWIT In good time, lady. Was not Sir John Daw here, to ask for him and the company?

MISTRESS OTTER I cannot assure you, Master Truewit. Here was a very melancholy knight in a ruff, that demanded my subject for somebody, a gentleman, I think.

CLERIMONT Ay, that was he, lady.

MISTRESS OTTER But he departed straight, I can resolve you.

DAUPHINE What an excellent choice phrase this lady expresses in! 31

TRUEWIT Oh, sir, she is the only authentical courtier, that is not naturally bred one, in the city.

MISTRESS OTTER You have taken that report upon trust, gentlemen.

TRUEWIT No, I assure you, the court governs it so, lady, in your behalf.

MISTRESS OTTER I am the servant of the court, and courtiers, sir.

TRUEWIT They are rather your idolaters. 40

MISTRESS OTTER Not so, sir.

*Enter CUTBEARD. DAUPHINE, TRUEWIT and CLERIMONT talk with him apart*

DAUPHINE How now, Cutbeard? Any cross?

CUTBEARD Oh, no, sir, *omnia bene*. 'Twas never better

8 intimate: 'either "get intimate with", an affected way of saying "go and join (your animals)"; or, threateningly, "start that topic again . . ." (*Intimare*, to intimate . . . to proclaim, set abroad", Florio, 1611)' (Procter)  
 9 toasts and butter: the correct food to serve with woodcock; but also meant milksop  
 10 woodcocks: the birds, but 'woodcock' also meant fool  
 16 Anabaptist: here, loosely, 'puritan'; more strictly, a Puritan sect which rejected infant baptism, in favour of voluntary adult baptism  
 20 briefly: shortly  
 25 my subject: i.e. Otter  
 29 resolve: assure (affectedly)  
 36 governs: determines  
 42 cross: hindrance

o' the hinges, all's sure. I have so pleased him with a curate that he's gone to't almost with the delight he hopes for soon.

DAUPHINE What is he, for a vicar? 47

CUTBEARD One that has caught a cold, sir, and can scarce be heard six inches off; as if he spoke out of a bulrush that were not picked, or his throat were full of pith; a fine quick fellow and an excellent barber of prayers. I came to tell you, sir, that you might *omnem movere lapidem* (as they say), be ready with your vexation.

DAUPHINE Gramercy, honest Cutbeard; be thereabouts with thy key to let us in.

CUTBEARD I will not fail you, sir: *ad manum*. Exit

TRUEWIT Well, I'll go watch my coaches.

CLERIMONT Do, and we'll send Daw to you, if you meet him not. Exit TRUEWIT

MISTRESS OTTER Is Master Truewit gone? 61

DAUPHINE Yes, lady, there is some unfortunate business fallen out.

MISTRESS OTTER So I judged by the physiognomy of the fellow that came in; and I had a dream last night too of the new pageant, and my Lady Mayoress, which is always very ominous to me. I told it my Lady Haughty t'other day, when her honour came hither to see some China stuffs; and she expounded it out of Artemidorus, and I have found it since very true. It has done me many affronts. 71

CLERIMONT Your dream, lady?

MISTRESS OTTER Yes, sir, anything I do but dream o' the city. It stained me a damask table-cloth, cost me eighteen pound at one time; and burnt me a black satin gown, as I stood by the fire at my Lady Centaure's chamber in the college, another time. A third time, at the lord's masque, it dropped all my wire and my ruff with wax candle, that I could not go up to the banquet. A fourth time, as I was taking coach to go to Ware to meet a friend, it dashed me a new suit all over (a crimson satin doublet, and black

43 *omnia bene*: all's well  
 43-4 'Twas . . . hinges: things have never run more smoothly  
 47 What . . . vicar?: what sort of vicar is he?  
 49-50 as . . . picked: 'i.e. huskily; *picked* = cleaned out, cleared' (Procter)  
 52-3 *omnem . . . lapidem*: leave no stone unturned  
 55 Gramercy: thanks  
 57 *ad manum*: at hand  
 66 pageant: procession at the installation of the new Lord Mayor  
 70 Artemidorus: second-century Greek author of a treatise on the meaning of dreams  
 81 Ware: 20 miles north of London; notorious for amorous assignations  
 82-3 crimson satin . . . velvet: fashionable and expensive fabrics, usually associated with the nobility  
 doublet: normally a man's garment

velvet skirts) with a brewer's horse, that I was fain to go in and shift me, and kept my chamber a leash of days for the anguish of it. 85

DAUPHINE These were dire mischances, lady.

CLERIMONT I would not dwell in the city, and 'twere so fatal to me.

MISTRESS OTTER Yes, sir, but I do take advice of my doctor, to dream of it as little as I can. 90

DAUPHINE You do well, Mistress Otter.

Enter DAW; CLERIMONT takes him aside

MISTRESS OTTER Will it please you to enter the house farther, gentlemen?

DAUPHINE And your favour, lady; but we stay to speak with a knight, Sir John Daw, who is here come. We shall follow you, lady.

MISTRESS OTTER At your own time, sir. It is my cousin Sir Amorous his feast—

DAUPHINE I know it, lady. 99

MISTRESS OTTER And mine together. But it is for his honour; and therefore I take no name of it, more than of the place.

DAUPHINE You are a bounteous kinswoman.

MISTRESS OTTER Your servant, sir.

Exit

Act III, scene iii

CLERIMONT comes forward with DAW

CLERIMONT Why, do not you know it, Sir John Daw?

DAW No, I am a rook if I do.

CLERIMONT I'll tell you then: she's married by this time! And whereas you were put i' the head that she was gone with Sir Dauphine, I assure you Sir Dauphine has been the noblest, honestest friend to you, that ever gentleman of your quality could boast of. He has discovered the whole plot, and made your mistress so acknowledging, and indeed so ashamed of her injury to you, that she desires you to forgive her, and but grace her wedding with your presence today—she is to be married to a very good fortune, she says, his uncle, old Morose; and she willed me in private to tell you, that she shall be able to do you more favours, and with more security now, than before. 15

DAW Did she say so, i' faith?

CLERIMONT Why, what do you think of me, Sir John! Ask Sir Dauphine.

---

84 shift me: change my clothes  
 leash: three (hunting term)  
 87 and: if  
 88 fatal: ominous  
 101 name: credit  
 of the place: for providing the place  
 4 put i' the head: made to think

DAW Nay, I believe you. Good Sir Dauphine, did she desire me to forgive her? 20

DAUPHINE I assure you, Sir John, she did.

DAW Nay, then, I do with all my heart, and I'll be jovial.

CLERIMONT Yes, for look you, sir, this was the injury to you. La Foole intended this feast to honour her bridal day, and made you the property to invite the college ladies, and promise to bring her; and then at the time she should have appeared (as his friend) to have given you the dor. Whereas now, Sir Dauphine has brought her to a feeling of it, with this kind of satisfaction, that you shall bring all the ladies to the place where she is, and be very jovial; and there she will have a dinner which shall be in your name, and so disappoint La Foole, to make you good again and, as it were, a saver i' the man. 34

DAW As I am a knight, I honour her, and forgive her heartily.

CLERIMONT About it then presently. Truewit is gone before to confront the coaches, and to acquaint you with so much if he meet you. Join with him, and 'tis well. (*Enter LA FOOLE*) See, here comes your antagonist, but take you no notice, but be very jovial.

LA FOOLE Are the ladies come, Sir John Daw, and your mistress? (*Exit DAW*) Sir Dauphine! You are exceeding welcome, and honest Master Clerimont. Where's my cousin? Did you see no collegiates, gentlemen? 45

DAUPHINE Collegiates! Do you not hear, Sir Amorous, how you are abused?

LA FOOLE How, sir!

CLERIMONT Will you speak so kindly to Sir John Daw, that has done you such an affront? 50

LA FOOLE Wherein, gentlemen? Let me be a suitor to you to know, I beseech you!

CLERIMONT Why, sir, his mistress is married today to Sir Dauphine's uncle, your cousin's neighbour, and he has diverted all the ladies and all your company thither, to frustrate your provision, and stick a disgrace upon you. He was here now to have enticed us away from you too; but we told him his own, I think.

22 jovial: cheerful

25 property: tool, means

28 the dor: a snub; see II.iii.46n

29 feeling of: sensitivity to

33 make . . . again: 'recoup your losses (as in gambling)' (Procter)

34 saver: 'a gambling term, "one who escapes loss, though without gain" (Dr Johnson)' (Procter)  
i' the man: of your manhood; with pun on 'main', meaning 'main point, turning the tables on La Foole; also, fixed score in the dice game, hazard, which if thrown by the caster enabled the other players to regain their stake money' (Procter)

56 provision: preparations

58 his own: his true character

LA FOOLE Has Sir John Daw wronged me so inhumanly?

DAUPHINE He has done it, Sir Amorous, most maliciously, and treacherously; but if you'll be ruled by us, you shall quit him, i' faith. 62

LA FOOLE Good gentlemen, I'll make one, believe it! How, I pray?

DAUPHINE Marry, sir, get me your pheasants, and your godwits, and your best meat, and dish it in silver dishes of your cousin's presently, and say nothing, but clap me a clean towel about you, like a sewer; and bare-headed, march afore it with a good confidence ('tis but over the way, hard by) and we'll second you, where you shall set it o' the board, and bid 'em welcome to't, which shall show 'tis yours, and disgrace his preparation utterly; and for your cousin, whereas she should be troubled here at home with care of making and giving welcome, she shall transfer all that labour thither, and be a principal guest herself, sit ranked with the college-honours, and be honoured, and have her health drunk as often, as bare, and as loud as the best of 'em. 79

LA FOOLE I'll go tell her presently. It shall be done, that's resolved. *Exit*

CLERIMONT I thought he would not hear it out, but 'twould take him.

DAUPHINE Well, there be guests and meat now; how shall we do for music?

CLERIMONT The smell of the venison going through the street will invite one noise of fiddlers or other.

DAUPHINE I would it would call the trumpeters thither.

CLERIMONT Faith, there is hope; they have intelligence of all feasts. There's good correspondence betwixt them and the London cooks. 'Tis twenty to one but we have 'em. 92

DAUPHINE 'Twill be a most solemn day for my uncle, and an excellent fit of mirth for us.

CLERIMONT Ay, if we can hold up the emulation betwixt Foole and Daw, and never bring them to expostulate.

DAUPHINE Tut, flatter 'em both (as Truewit says) and you may take their understandings in a purse-net.

62 quit: repay

63 make one: join in

68 sewer: chief attendant at a meal who supervised the setting of the table, the seating of the guests and the serving of the dishes

69 bare-headed: i.e. like a servant

70 second: follow

79 bare: bare-headed

87 noise: band

93 solemn: a) ceremonious; b) gloomy

95 emulation: contention, rivalry

97 expostulate: declare their grievances

99 purse-net: bag-shaped net with draw-string opening, used for catching rabbits

They'll believe themselves to be just such men as we make 'em, neither more nor less. They have nothing, not the use of their senses, but by tradition. 102

LA FOOLE *enters like a sewer*

CLERIMONT See! Sir Amorous has his towel on already. Have you persuaded your cousin?

LA FOOLE Yes, 'tis very feasible: she'll do anything, she says, rather than the La Fooles shall be disgraced.

DAUPHINE She is a noble kinswoman. It will be such a pestling device, Sir Amorous! It will pound all your enemy's practices to powder, and blow him up with his own mine, his own train. 110

LA FOOLE Nay, we'll give fire, I warrant you.

CLERIMONT But you must carry it privately, without any noise, and take no notice by any means—

*Enter OTTER*

OTTER Gentlemen, my princess says you shall have all her silver dishes, *festinate*; and she's gone to alter her tire a little and go with you—

CLERIMONT And yourself too, Captain Otter.

DAUPHINE By any means, sir.

OTTER Yes, sir, I do mean it; but I would entreat my cousin Sir Amorous, and you gentlemen, to be suitors to my princess, that I may carry my bull, and my bear, as well as my horse. 112

CLERIMONT That you shall do, Captain Otter.

LA FOOLE My cousin will never consent, gentlemen.

DAUPHINE She must consent, Sir Amorous, to reason.

LA FOOLE Why, she says they are no decorum among ladies.

OTTER But they are *decora*, and that's better, sir.

CLERIMONT Ay, she must hear argument. Did not Pasiphae, who was a queen, love a bull? And was not Callisto, the mother of Arcas, turned into a bear, and made a star, Mistress Ursula, i' the heavens? 132

OTTER Oh God! That I could ha' said as much! I will

102 tradition: i.e. handing over

108 pestling: crushing (as with pestle)

109 practices: plots

110 train: line of gunpowder, laid to detonate a mine; also, a snare or trick

112 carry: manage

115 *festinate*: quickly

116 tire: headdress

126 no decorum: unseemly

128 *decora*: beautiful

130 Pasiphae . . . bull: Pasiphae was married to Minos, king of Crete. When he refused to sacrifice a bull to Neptune, the god punished him by making Pasiphae fall in love with the bull. Their offspring was the Minotaur

131 Callisto: loved by Jupiter (by whom she had a son, Arcas); changed by Juno into a bear, and after her death into a constellation (the Great Bear) by Jupiter. The story is recounted in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, II.401–507

have these stories painted i' the Bear Garden, *ex Ovidii Metamorphosi*.

DAUPHINE Where is your princess, captain? Pray be our leader.

OTTER That I shall, sir.

CLERIMONT Make haste, good Sir Amorous.

*Exeunt*

## Act III, scene iv

*Enter MOROSE, EPICOENE, PARSON, CUTBEARD*

MOROSE Sir, there's an angel for yourself, and a brace of angels for your cold. Muse not at this manage of my bounty. It is fit we should thank fortune double to nature, for any benefit she confers upon us; besides, it is your imperfection, but my solace.

PARSON I thank your worship, so is it mine now.

*The PARSON speaks as having a cold*

MOROSE What says he, Cutbeard?

CUTBEARD He says *praesto*, sir: whensoever your worship needs him, he can be ready with the like. He got this cold with sitting up late, and singing catches with cloth-workers. 11

MOROSE No more. I thank him.

PARSON God keep your worship and give you much joy with your fair spouse. Umh, umh. *He coughs*

MOROSE Oh, oh! Stay, Cutbeard! Let him give me five shillings of my money back. As it is bounty to reward benefits, so is it equity to mulct injuries. I will have it. What says he?

CUTBEARD He cannot change it, sir.

MOROSE It must be changed. 20

CUTBEARD (*Aside to PARSON*) Cough again.

MOROSE What says he?

CUTBEARD He will cough out the rest, sir.

PARSON Umh, umh, umh. *Coughs again*

MOROSE Away, away with him, stop his mouth, away, I forgive it— *Exit CUTBEARD with PARSON*

EPICOENE Fie, Master Morose, that you will use this violence to a man of the church.

MOROSE How! 29

EPICOENE It does not become your gravity or breeding (as you pretend in court) to have offered this outrage

134–5 *ex . . . Metamorphosi*: out of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; the story of Pasiphae in fact comes from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, I.295–326

1 angel: gold coin, worth about ten shillings

2 manage: management

3–4 double to: twice as much as

8 *praesto*: at your service

10 catches: part-songs, rounds

11 cloth-workers: who customarily sang whilst working

17 mulct: fine

30 gravity: dignity

31 pretend: claim

on a waterman, or any more boisterous creature,  
much less on a man of his civil coat.  
MOROSE You can speak then!  
EPICOENE Yes, sir.  
MOROSE Speak out, I mean.  
EPICOENE Ay, sir. Why, did you think you had married  
a statue? Or a motion only? One of the French  
puppets, with the eyes turned with a wire? Or some  
innocent out of the hospital, that would stand with  
her hands thus, and a plaice mouth, and look upon  
you? 42  
MOROSE Oh immodesty! A manifest woman! What,  
Cutbeard!  
EPICOENE Nay, never quarrel with Cutbeard, sir, it is  
too late now. I confess it doth bate somewhat of the  
modesty I had, when I writ simply maid; but I hope I  
shall make it a stock still competent to the estate and  
dignity of your wife.  
MOROSE She can talk! 50  
EPICOENE Yes, indeed, sir.  
MOROSE What sirrah! None of my knaves there? (*Enter*  
MUTE) Where is this impostor, Cutbeard?  
MUTE *makes signs*  
EPICOENE Speak to him, fellow, speak to him. I'll have  
none of this coated, unnatural dumbness in my  
house, in a family where I govern. *Exit MUTE*  
MOROSE She is my regent already! I have married a  
Penthesilea, a Semiramis, sold my liberty to a distaff!

### Act III, scene v

*Enter TRUEWIT*

TRUEWIT Where's Master Morose?

- 
- 33 civil coat: sober profession
  - 38 motion: puppet
  - 40 innocent: half-wit
  - hospital: i.e. Bedlam; see II.ii.37n
  - 41 hands thus: probably loosely crossed in front, indicating  
obedience or idiocy (eds)
  - plaice mouth: small, puckered mouth, like a fish's
  - 43 A manifest woman: i.e. manifestly a woman
  - 46 bate: lessen
  - 47 writ: designated myself
  - 48 stock: fund, or capital sum; also, dowry
  - competent: appropriate, sufficient
  - estate: status
  - 52 knaves: servants
  - 55 coated: compulsory
  - 56 family: household
  - 58 Penthesilea: queen of the Amazons, who fought against  
the Greeks at Troy; see III.v.43
  - Semiramis: Assyrian warrior-queen. After her husband's  
death, she dressed in men's clothes to govern
  - distaff: staff on which thread is made; this was  
traditionally women's work, and hence the word came to  
stand metonymically for 'woman'

MOROSE Is he come again? Lord have mercy upon me.  
TRUEWIT I wish you all joy, Mistress Epicoene, with  
your grave and honourable match.  
EPICOENE I return you the thanks, Master Truewit, so  
friendly a wish deserves.  
MOROSE She has acquaintance, too! 7  
TRUEWIT God save you, sir, and give you all  
contentment in your fair choice here. Before I was  
the bird of night to you, the owl, but now I am the  
messenger of peace, a dove, and bring you the glad  
wishes of many friends, to the celebration of this  
good hour.  
MOROSE What hour, sir?  
TRUEWIT Your marriage hour, sir. I commend your  
resolution, that (notwithstanding all the dangers I  
laid afore you, in the voice of a night-crow) would yet  
go on, and be yourself. It shows you are a man  
constant to your own ends, and upright to your  
purposes, that would not be put off with left-handed  
cries. 21  
MOROSE How should you arrive at the knowledge of so  
much?  
TRUEWIT Why, did you ever hope, sir, committing the  
secrecy of it to a barber, that less than the whole  
town should know it? You might as well ha' told it  
the conduit, or the bakehouse, or the infantry that  
follow the court, and with more security. Could your  
gravity forget so old and noted a remnant as *lippis et*  
*tonsoribus notum*? Well, sir, forgive it yourself now,  
the fault, and be communicable with your friends.  
Here will be three or four fashionable ladies, from  
the college, to visit you presently, and their train of  
minions and followers. 34  
MOROSE Bar my doors! Bar my doors! Where are all  
my eaters, my mouths now? (*Enter SERVANTS*) Bar up  
my doors, you varlets!  
EPICOENE He is a varlet that stirs to such an office. Let  
'em stand open. I would see him that dares move his  
eyes toward it. Shall I have a barricado made against  
my friends, to be barred of any pleasure they can  
bring in to me with honourable visitation? 42  
*Exit SERVANTS*

- 
- 10, 17 owl . . . night-crow: bearers of evil omen, the latter not  
denoting a specific bird
  - 20 left-handed: sinister, ill-omened (Latin *sinister* means  
'left')
  - 27 conduit: place from which fresh water was collected; a  
place where gossip was exchanged, as was the bakehouse.
  - infantry . . . court: the 'blackguard' or most menial  
servants employed by the court; they brought up the rear  
on royal progresses
  - 29 remnant: scrap of quotation
  - 29-30 *lippis et tonsoribus notum*: 'known to the bleary-eyed  
and to barbers' (Horace, *Satires*, I.vii.3)
  - 31 communicable: affable

MOROSE Oh, Amazonian impudence!  
 TRUEWIT Nay, faith, in this, sir, she speaks but reason, and methinks is more continent than you. Would you go to bed so presently, sir, afore noon? A man of your head and hair should owe more to that reverend ceremony, and not mount the marriage-bed like a town bull, or a mountain goat, but stay the due season; and ascend it then with religion, and fear. Those delights are to be steeped in the humour and silence of the night; and give the day to other open pleasures, and jollities of feast, of music, of revels, of discourse: we'll have all, sir, that may make your hymen high and happy. 55  
 MOROSE Oh, my torment, my torment!  
 TRUEWIT Nay, if you endure the first half hour, sir, so tediously, and with this irksomeness, what comfort, or hope, can this fair gentlewoman make to herself hereafter, in the consideration of so many years as are to come— 61  
 MOROSE Of my affliction. Good sir, depart, and let her do it alone.  
 TRUEWIT I have done, sir.  
 MOROSE That cursed barber!  
 TRUEWIT (Yes, faith, a cursed wretch indeed, sir.)  
 MOROSE I have married his cittern, that's common to all men. Some plague above the plague—  
 TRUEWIT (All Egypt's ten plagues—)  
 MOROSE Revenge me on him. 70  
 TRUEWIT 'Tis very well, sir. If you laid on a curse or two more, I'll assure you he'll bear 'em. As, that he may get the pox with seeking to cure it, sir? Or, that while he is curling another man's hair, his own may drop off? Or, for burning some male bawd's lock, he may have his brain beat out with the curling-iron?

47 head and hair: judgement and character (with ironic allusion to Morose's appearance)  
 49 stay: wait  
 50 religion, and fear: awe and dread (of the solemnity of marriage)  
 51 humour: a) moisture (see 'steeped'); b) inclination, fancy (Holdsworth)  
 55 hymen: wedding  
 high: dignified  
 58 tediously: a) irritatedly; b) tiresomely (Holdsworth)  
 66 (Yes . . . sir.): eds vary in how they interpret the enclosing of Truewit's words in parentheses. Procter takes them to indicate his 'choric role', building on and then taking over Morose's curses, whilst Beaurline takes them to show that the words are spoken *sotto voce*  
 67 cittern: a lute-like instrument kept in barber's shops for customers to play on to pass the time  
 69 ten plagues: sent by God to to persuade Pharaoh to release the Israelites (Exodus 7–12)  
 73 pox: syphilis. Barbers, also surgeons/medical practitioners at this time, would have treated this  
 75 lock: love-lock

MOROSE No, let the wretch live wretched. May he get the itch, and his shop so lousy as no man dare come at him, nor he come at no man.  
 TRUEWIT (Ay, and if he would swallow all his balls for pills, let not them purge him.) 81  
 MOROSE Let his warming-pan be ever cold.  
 TRUEWIT (A perpetual frost underneath it, sir.)  
 MOROSE Let him never hope to see fire again.  
 TRUEWIT (But in hell, sir.)  
 MOROSE His chairs be always empty, his scissors rust, and his combs mould in their cases.  
 TRUEWIT Very dreadful that! (And may he lose the invention, sir, of carving lanterns in paper.)  
 MOROSE Let there be no bawd carted that year to employ a basin of his; but let him be glad to eat his sponge for bread. 92  
 TRUEWIT And drink lotium to it, and much good do him.  
 MOROSE Or, for want of bread—  
 TRUEWIT Eat ear-wax, sir. I'll help you. Or, draw his own teeth and add them to the lute-string.  
 MOROSE No, beat the old ones to powder, and make bread of them.  
 TRUEWIT (Yes, make meal o' the millstones.) 100  
 MOROSE May all the botches, and burns, that he has cured on others break out upon him.  
 TRUEWIT And he now forget the cure of 'em in himself, sir; or, if he do remember it, let him ha' scraped all his linen into lint for't, and have not a rag left him to set up with.  
 MOROSE Let him never set up again, but have the gout in his hands forever. Now no more, sir.  
 TRUEWIT Oh, that last was too high set! You might go less with him, i' faith, and be revenged enough; as, that he be never able to new-paint his pole— 111  
 MOROSE Good sir, no more. I forgot myself.  
 TRUEWIT Or, want credit to take up with a comb-maker—

78 the itch: contagious skin disease, scabies  
 80 balls: of soap  
 89 lanterns in paper: barbers cut out lanterns from oiled paper, and sold them  
 91 basin: barbers hired out metal basins for people in the crowd to beat when bawds (procuresses or pimps) were carted through the streets as a punishment  
 93 lotium: stale urine, used by barbers to dress hair  
 96 ear-wax . . . teeth: barbers also cleaned ears and pulled teeth, which were then hung on strings in the shops  
 100 millstones: "grinders", teeth' (Procter)  
 101 botches: boils  
 105 scraped . . . lint: lint, a soft material used to dress wounds, was made by scaping linen cloth  
 106–7 set up with . . . set up: set up in business with . . . set hair  
 109 too high set: went too far (gambling term)  
 go less: go for lower stakes (from gambling)  
 113 want credit . . . with: be unable to get goods on credit from

MOROSE No more, sir.  
 TRUEWIT Or, having broken his glass in a former  
 despair, fall now into a much greater, of ever getting  
 another—  
 MOROSE I beseech you, no more.  
 TRUEWIT Or, that he never be trusted with trimming  
 of any but chimney-sweepers— 121  
 MOROSE Sir—  
 TRUEWIT Or, may he cut a collier's throat with his  
 razor by chance-medley, and yet hang for't.  
 MOROSE I will forgive him, rather than hear any more.  
 I beseech you, sir.

### Act III, scene vi

*Enter* DAW, HAUGHTY, CENTAURE, MAVIS, TRUSTY  
 DAW This way, madam.  
 MOROSE Oh, the sea breaks in upon me! Another  
 flood! An inundation! I shall be o'erwhelmed with  
 noise. It beats already at my shores. I feel an  
 earthquake in myself for't.  
 DAW Give you joy, mistress.  
 MOROSE Has she servants too!  
 DAW I have brought some ladies here to see and know  
 you. (*She kisses them severally as he presents them*) My  
 Lady Haughty, this my Lady Centaure, Mistress Dol  
 Mavis, Mistress Trusty, my Lady Haughty's woman.  
 Where's your husband? Let's see him: can he endure  
 no noise? Let me come to him. 13  
 MOROSE What nomenclator is this!  
 TRUEWIT Sir John Daw, sir, your wife's servant, this.  
 MOROSE A Daw, and her servant! Oh, 'tis decreed, 'tis  
 decreed of me, and she have such servants.

*Attempts to leave*

TRUEWIT Nay, sir, you must kiss the ladies, you must  
 not go away now; they come toward you to seek you  
 out. 20  
 HAUGHTY I' faith, Master Morose, would you steal a  
 marriage thus, in the midst of so many friends, and  
 not acquaint us? Well, I'll kiss you, notwithstanding  
 the justice of my quarrel. You shall give me leave,  
 mistress, to use a becoming familiarity with your  
 husband.

121, 123 chimney-sweepers . . . colliers: the least desirable  
 customers, because probably the dirtiest  
 124 chance-medley: manslaughter, homicide by misadventure  
 2-3 Another flood: 'another' may mean "second", the first  
 being the flood of Genesis, vii' (Holdsworth)  
 SD *severally*: in turn  
 14 nomenclator: announcer of guests' names (with pun on  
 'clatter')  
 16-17 'tis decreed of me: judgement is passed on me  
 and: if  
 21-2 steal a marriage: get married secretly

EPICOENE Your ladyship does me an honour in it, to let  
 me know he is so worthy your favour; as you have  
 done both him and me grace to visit so unprepared a  
 pair to entertain you. 30  
 MOROSE Compliment! Compliment!  
 EPICOENE But I must lay the burden of that upon my  
 servant here.  
 HAUGHTY It shall not need, Mistress Morose; we will  
 all bear, rather than one shall be oppressed.  
 MOROSE I know it; and you will teach her the faculty, if  
 she be to learn it.

*The collegiates talk apart with TRUEWIT*

HAUGHTY Is this the silent woman?  
 CENTAURE Nay! She has found her tongue since she  
 was married, Master Truewit says. 40  
 HAUGHTY Oh, Master Truewit! Save you. What kind  
 of creature is your bride here? She speaks, methinks!  
 TRUEWIT Yes, madam, believe it, she is a gentlewoman  
 of very absolute behaviour, and of a good race.  
 HAUGHTY And Jack Daw told us she could not speak.  
 TRUEWIT So it was carried in plot, madam, to put her  
 upon this old fellow, by Sir Dauphine, his nephew,  
 and one or two more of us; but she is a woman of an  
 excellent assurance, and an extraordinary happy wit  
 and tongue. You shall see her make rare sport with  
 Daw ere night. 51  
 HAUGHTY And he brought us to laugh at her!  
 TRUEWIT That falls out often, madam, that he that  
 thinks himself the master-wit is the master-fool. I  
 assure your ladyship, ye cannot laugh at her.  
 HAUGHTY No, we'll have her to the college: and she  
 have wit, she shall be one of us! Shall she not,  
 Centaure? We'll make her a collegiate.  
 CENTAURE Yes, faith, madam, and Mavis and she will  
 set up a side. 60  
 TRUEWIT Believe it, madam, and Mistress Mavis, she  
 will sustain her part.  
 MAVIS I'll tell you that when I have talked with her,  
 and tried her.  
 HAUGHTY Use her very civilly, Mavis.  
 MAVIS So I will, madam.

*MAVIS walks apart with EPICOENE*

MOROSE Blessed minute, that they would whisper thus  
 ever.  
 TRUEWIT In the meantime, madam, would but your  
 ladyship help to vex him a little: you know his  
 disease, talk to him about the wedding-ceremonies,  
 or call for your gloves, or— 72

36-7 faculty . . . it: 'ability (to bear [sexual] burdens) if she has  
 not learnt it already; taking up the sexual sense of  
*oppressed*, "ravished" (Latin *opprimere*)' (Holdsworth)  
 44 absolute: perfect  
 race: family  
 60 a side: a partnership in cards

HAUGHTY Let me alone. Centaure, help me. Master bridegroom, where are you?  
 MOROSE Oh, it was too miraculously good to last!  
 HAUGHTY We see no ensigns of a wedding here, no character of a bride-ale: where be our scarfs, and our gloves? I pray you give 'em us. Let's know your bride's colours, and yours, at least.  
 CENTAURE Alas, madam, he has provided none. 80  
 MOROSE Had I known your ladyship's painter, I would.  
 HAUGHTY He has given it you, Centaure, i' faith. But do you hear, Master Morose, a jest will not absolve you in this manner. You that have sucked the milk of the court, and from thence have been brought up to the very strong meats and wine of it; been a courtier from the biggen to the night-cap (as we may say); and you to offend in such a high point of ceremony as this, and let your nuptials want all marks of solemnity! How much plate have you lost today (if you had but regarded your profit), what gifts, what friends, through your mere rusticity? 92  
 MOROSE Madam—  
 HAUGHTY Pardon me, sir, I must insinuate your errors to you. No gloves? No garters? No scarfs? No epithalamium? No masque?  
 DAW Yes, madam, I'll make an epithalamium, I promised my mistress, I have begun it already: will your ladyship hear it?  
 HAUGHTY Ay, good Jack Daw. 100  
 MOROSE Will it please your ladyship command a chamber and be private with your friend? You shall have your choice of rooms to retire to after: my whole house is yours. I know it hath been your ladyship's errand into the city at other times, however now you have been unhappily diverted upon me; but I shall be loth to break any honourable custom of your ladyship's. And therefore, good madam—  
 EPICOENE Come, you are a rude bridegroom, to entertain ladies of honour in this fashion. 110  
 CENTAURE He is a rude groom indeed.

73 Let me alone: i.e. leave it to me  
 76 ensigns: signs  
 77-8 scarfs . . . gloves: given to guests at weddings  
 79 colours: of the bride and groom, worn by their respective friends (eds)  
 81 painter: cosmetician  
 82 given it you: i.e. scored a point over you  
 86 strong meats: solid food  
 87 biggen: baby's bonnet  
 90 solemnity: ceremoniousness  
 92 mere rusticity: sheer uncouthness  
 95 garters: the bride's garters were competed for by the young men and bridesmaids  
 96 epithalamium: wedding song in honour of bride and groom  
 104 it: i.e. such an assignation  
 111 groom: a) bridegroom; b) servant

TRUEWIT By that light, you deserve to be grafted, and have your horns reach from one side of the island to the other.—(Aside to MOROSE) Do not mistake me, sir; I but speak this to give the ladies some heart again, not for any malice to you.  
 MOROSE Is this your bravo, ladies?  
 TRUEWIT As God help me, if you utter such another word, I'll take mistress bride in and begin to you in a very sad cup, do you see? Go to, know your friends and such as love you. 121

### Act III, scene vii

Enter CLERIMONT with MUSICIANS

CLERIMONT By your leave, ladies. Do you want any music? I have brought you variety of noises. Play, sirs, all of you. *Music of all sorts*  
 MOROSE Oh, a plot, a plot, a plot, a plot upon me! This day I shall be their anvil to work on, they will grate me asunder. 'Tis worse than the noise of a saw.  
 CLERIMONT No, they are hair, rosin, and guts. I can give you the receipt.  
 TRUEWIT Peace, boys.  
 CLERIMONT Play, I say. 10  
 TRUEWIT Peace, rascals. (To MOROSE) You see who's your friend now, sir? Take courage, put on a martyr's resolution. Mock down all their attemptings with patience. 'Tis but a day, and I would suffer heroically. Should an ass exceed me in fortitude? No. You betray your infirmity with your hanging dull ears, and make them insult: bear up bravely, and constantly.  
 (LA FOOLE with SERVANTS passes over sewing the meat, followed by MISTESS OTTER) Look you here, sir, what honour is done you unexpected by your nephew; a wedding-dinner come, and a knight-sewer before it, for the more reputation, and fine Mistress Otter, your neighbour, in the rump, or tail of it. 22  
 MOROSE Is that Gorgon, that Medusa come? Hide me, hide me!

112 grafted: i.e. to have cuckold's horns grafted on to your head  
 117 bravo: hired bully  
 119-20 begin . . . cup: 'drink your health in a way most unpleasant to you (cuckold you)' (Procter)  
 2 noises: bands of musicians (with suggestion of usual sense); see II.vi.38  
 5 grate: grind; also, harass, irritate  
 7 hair . . . guts: to produce the sound from a violin: horsehair for the bow, rosin to rub on it, and gut for the strings  
 8 receipt: formula  
 15 ass: proverbial beast of endurance; also of stupidity  
 16 infirmity: weakness  
 17 insult: exult  
 SD sewing the meat: directing the serving of the dishes  
 23 Medusa: the most fearsome of the Gorgons



TRUEWIT I warrant you, sir, she will not transform you.

Look upon her with a good courage. Pray you entertain her and conduct your guests in. No? Mistress bride, will you entreat in the ladies? Your bridegroom is so shamefaced here—

EPICOENE Will it please your ladyship, madam? 30

HAUGHTY With the benefit of your company, mistress.

EPICOENE Servant, pray you perform your duties.

DAW And glad to be commanded, mistress.

CENTAURE How like you her wit, Mavis?

MAVIS Very prettily, absolutely well.

MISTRESS OTTER (*Trying to take precedence*) 'Tis my place.

MAVIS You shall pardon me, Mistress Otter.

MISTRESS OTTER Why, I am a collegiate.

MAVIS But not in ordinary. 40

MISTRESS OTTER But I am.

MAVIS We'll dispute that within. *Exit ladies with* DAW

CLERIMONT Would this had lasted a little longer.

TRUEWIT And that they had sent for the heralds.

(*Enter OTTER*) Captain Otter, what news?

OTTER I have brought my bull, bear, and horse, in private, and yonder are the trumpeters without, and the drum, gentlemen. *The drum and trumpets sound*

MOROSE Oh, oh, oh! 49

OTTER And we will have a rouse in each of 'em, anon, for bold Britons, i' faith. *They sound again*

MOROSE Oh, oh, oh! *Exit MOROSE*

ALL Follow, follow, follow!

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene i

*Enter TRUEWIT, CLERIMONT*

TRUEWIT Was there ever poor bridegroom so tormented? Or man, indeed?

CLERIMONT I have not read of the like in the chronicles of the land.

TRUEWIT Sure, he cannot but go to a place of rest, after all this purgatory.

CLERIMONT He may presume it, I think.

TRUEWIT The spitting, the coughing, the laughter, the neezing, the farting, dancing, noise of the music, and her masculine and loud commanding, and urging the whole family, makes him think he has married a Fury.

CLERIMONT And she carries it up bravely.

25 transform: i.e. to stone (see II.iv.16n)

29 shamefaced: bashful

40 in ordinary: see II.iii.98n

44 heralds: who decided questions of precedence

56 rouse: deep drink

9 neezing: sneezing

11 Fury: avenging female deity

12 carries . . . bravely: 'keeps it up splendidly' (Holdsworth)

TRUEWIT Ay, she takes any occasion to speak: that's the height on't.

CLERIMONT And how soberly Dauphine labours to satisfy him that it was none of his plot! 16

TRUEWIT And has almost brought him to the faith i' the article. (*Enter DAUPHINE*) Here he comes.—

Where is he now? What's become of him, Dauphine?

DAUPHINE Oh, hold me up a little, I shall go away i' the jest else. He has got on his whole nest of night-caps, and locked himself up i' the top o' the house, as high as ever he can climb from the noise. I peeped in at a cranny, and saw him sitting over a cross-beam o' the roof, like him o' the saddler's horse in Fleet Street, upright; and he will sleep there. 26

CLERIMONT But where are your collegiates?

DAUPHINE Withdrawn with the bride in private.

TRUEWIT Oh, they are instructing her i' the college grammar. If she have grace with them, she knows all their secrets instantly.

CLERIMONT Methinks the Lady Haughty looks well today, for all my dispraise of her i' the morning. I think I shall come about to thee again, Truewit. 34

TRUEWIT Believe it, I told you right. Women ought to repair the losses time and years have made i' their features with dressings. And an intelligent woman, if she know by herself the least defect, will be most curious to hide it; and it becomes her. If she be short, let her sit much, lest when she stands, she be thought to sit. If she have an ill foot, let her wear her gown the longer, and her shoe the thinner. If a fat hand, and scald nails, let her carve the less, and act in gloves. If a sour breath, let her never discourse fasting, and always talk at her distance. If she have black and rugged teeth, let her offer the less at laughter, especially if she laugh wide, and open. 47

CLERIMONT Oh, you shall have some women, when they laugh, you would think they brayed, it is so rude, and—

TRUEWIT Ay, and others that will stalk i' their gait like

14 height on't: best of it

17–18 faith . . . article: reference to Articles of Faith, the statements to which ministers of the Church of England have to subscribe

20–1 go . . . jest: die laughing

21 nest: set, in which the smaller fit inside the larger

25 saddler's horse: model horse and rider, outside a saddler's shop

30 have . . . them: in favour with them

34 come . . . thee: come round to your opinion

35–139 Truewit's comments on women derive from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, I, II and III

38 by: about

39 curious: careful

43 scald: scaly, scabbed

carve . . . act: both words meant 'gesture'

46 offer: attempt

an estrich, and take huge strides. I cannot endure such a sight. I love measure i' the feet and number i' the voice: they are gentlenesses that oft-times draw no less than the face. 55

DAUPHINE How cam'st thou to study these creatures so exactly? I would thou wouldst make me a proficient.

TRUEWIT Yes, but you must leave to live i' your chamber then a month together upon *Amadis de Gaule*, or *Don Quixote*, as you are wont; and come abroad where the matter is frequent, to court, to tiltings, public shows, and feasts, to plays, and church sometimes: thither they come to show their new tires too, to see, and to be seen. In these places a man shall find whom to love, whom to play with, whom to touch once, whom to hold ever. The variety arrests his judgement. A wench to please a man comes not down dropping from the ceiling, as he lies on his back droning a tobacco-pipe. He must go where she is. 70

DAUPHINE Yes, and be never the near.

TRUEWIT Out, heretic! That diffidence makes thee worthy it should be so.

CLERIMONT He says true to you, Dauphine.

DAUPHINE Why?

TRUEWIT A man should not doubt to overcome any woman. Think he can vanquish 'em, and he shall; for though they deny, their desire is to be tempted. Penelope herself cannot hold out long. Ostend, you saw, was taken at last. You must persever, and hold to your purpose. They would solicit us, but that they are afraid. Howsoever, they wish in their hearts we should solicit them. Praise 'em, flatter 'em, you shall never want eloquence, or trust; even the chastest

delight to feel themselves that way rubbed. With praises you must mix kisses too. If they take them, they'll take more. Though they strive, they would be overcome. 88

CLERIMONT Oh, but a man must beware of force.

TRUEWIT It is to them an acceptable violence, and has oft-times the place of the greatest courtesy. She that might have been forced, and you let her go free without touching, though she then seem to thank you, will ever hate you after; and glad i' the face, is assuredly sad at the heart.

CLERIMONT But all women are not to be taken all ways. 97

TRUEWIT 'Tis true. No more than all birds, or all fishes. If you appear learned to an ignorant wench, or jocund to a sad, or witty to a foolish, why, she presently begins to mistrust herself. You must approach them i' their own height, their own line: for the contrary makes many that fear to commit themselves to noble and worthy fellows, run into the embraces of a rascal. If she love wit, give verses, though you borrow 'em of a friend, or buy 'em, to have good. If valour, talk of your sword, and be frequent in the mention of quarrels, though you be staunch in fighting. If activity, be seen o' your barbary often, or leaping over stools, for the credit of your back. If she love good clothes or dressing, have your learned council about you every morning, your French tailor, barber, liner, *et cetera*. Let your powder, your glass, and your comb be your dearest acquaintance. Take more care for the ornament of your head, than the safety; and wish the commonwealth rather troubled, than a hair about you. That will take her. Then if she be covetous and craving, do you promise anything, and perform sparingly; so shall you keep her in appetite still. Seem as you would give, but be like a barren field that yields little, or unlucky dice to foolish and hoping gamesters. Let your gifts be slight, and dainty, rather than precious. Let cunning be above cost. Give

52 estrich: ostrich

53 measure: grace (in dancing)  
number: rhythm

54 gentlenesses: elegancies  
draw: attract

57 proficient: learner

58 leave: cease

59-60 *Amadis . . . Quixote*: chivalric romances despised as frivolous by Jonson

61 matter is frequent: material is plentiful

62 tiltings: jousts (by now, mock-combats staged for courtly entertainment)

69 droning: sucking (as on a bagpipe)

71 near: nearer

78 deny: refuse

79 Penelope: wife of Odysseus, who resisted her suitors for twenty years until her husband returned  
Ostend: captured by the Spanish in 1604 after a three-year siege

80 persever: persevere

84 want . . . trust: i.e. lack eloquence, or lack trust from your audience

85 rubbed: annoyed

87 strive: struggle  
would be: wish to be

92 and: if

101 presently: immediately

102 height . . . line: high and low parries (in fencing)

109 staunch: cautious

activity: exercise

barbary: horse

111 back: a "good back" implies sexual prowess' (Holdsworth)

116 safety: i.e. of your head

123-4 Let . . . cost: let your ingenuity be greater than your expense

cherries at time of year, or apricots; and say they were sent you out o' the country, though you bought 'em in Cheapside. Admire her tires; like her in all fashions; compare her in every habit to some deity; invent excellent dreams to flatter her, and riddles; or, if she be a great one, perform always the second parts to her: like what she likes, praise whom she praises; and fail not to make the household and servants yours, yea, the whole family, and salute 'em by their names ('tis but light cost if you can purchase 'em so) and make her physician your pensioner, and her chief woman. Nor will it be out of your gain to make love to her too, so she follow, not usher, her lady's pleasure. All blabbing is taken away when she comes to be a part of the crime.

139 DAUPHINE On what courtly lap hast thou late slept, to come forth so sudden and absolute a courtling?

TRUEWIT Good faith, I should rather question you, that are so hearkening after these mysteries. I begin to suspect your diligence, Dauphine. Speak, art thou in love in earnest?

DAUPHINE Yes, by my troth, am I; 'twere ill dissembling before thee.

TRUEWIT With which of 'em, I pray thee?

DAUPHINE With all the collegiates.

CLERIMONT Out on thee! We'll keep you at home, believe it, i' the stable, and you be such a stallion. 151

TRUEWIT No. I like him well. Men should love wisely, and all women: some one for the face, and let her please the eye; another for the skin, and let her please the touch; a third for the voice, and let her please the ear; and where the objects mix, let the senses so too. Thou wouldst think it strange, if I should make 'em all in love with thee afore night!

DAUPHINE I would say thou hadst the best philtre i' the world, and couldst do more than Madam Medea, or Doctor Forman. 161

TRUEWIT If I do not, let me play the mountebank for my meat while I live, and the bawd for my drink.

DAUPHINE So be it, I say.

125 at time of year: in season

128 habit: outfit

130 a great one: of high rank  
second parts: supporting roles

135 physician your pensioner: 'i.e. buy his support' (Holdsworth)

136 woman: maidservant  
out of your gain: outside your interests

141 courtling: courtier

143 hearkening: enquiring

159 philtre: love potion

160 Medea: magician, who helped Jason win the Golden Fleece, and restored youth to his father, Aeson

161 Doctor Forman: Simon Forman (1552–1611) was a noted London astrologer, quack and supplier of love potions

## Act IV, scene ii

Enter OTTER, DAW, LA FOOLE

OTTER Oh lord, gentlemen, how my knights and I have missed you here!

CLERIMONT Why, captain, what service, what service?  
OTTER To see me bring up my bull, bear, and horse to fight.

DAW Yes, faith, the captain says we shall be his dogs to bait 'em.

DAUPHINE A good employment.

TRUEWIT Come on, let's see a course then.

LA FOOLE I am afraid my cousin will be offended if she come. 11

OTTER Be afraid of nothing. Gentlemen, I have placed the drum and the trumpets, and one to give 'em the sign when you are ready. (*Brings out the cups*) Here's my bull for myself, and my bear for Sir John Daw, and my horse for Sir Amorous. Now, set your foot to mine, and yours to his, and—

LA FOOLE Pray God my cousin come not.

OTTER Saint George and Saint Andrew, fear no cousins. Come, sound, sound! *Et rauco strepuerunt cornua cantu.* 21

*Drum and trumpets sound. They drink*

TRUEWIT Well said, captain, i' faith; well fought at the bull.

CLERIMONT Well held at the bear.

TRUEWIT 'Low, 'low, captain!

DAUPHINE Oh, the horse has kicked off his dog already.

LA FOOLE I cannot drink it, as I am a knight.

TRUEWIT Gods so! Off with his spurs, somebody.

LA FOOLE It goes again my conscience. My cousin will be angry with it. 31

DAW I ha' done mine.

TRUEWIT You fought high and fair, Sir John.

CLERIMONT At the head.

DAUPHINE Like an excellent bear-dog.

CLERIMONT (*Aside to DAW*) You take no notice of the business, I hope.

DAW (*Aside to CLERIMONT*) Not a word, sir, you see we are jovial.

3 service: 'in the military sense: operation' (Holdsworth)

4–84 the metaphors here are drawn from bull- and bear-baiting

9 course: a) drinking round; b) bout between dogs and baited animals

16–17 set . . . mine: stance taken in drinking bouts

19–20 fear no cousins: adapting the proverb 'Fear no colours'

20–1 *Et . . . cantu*: 'And the trumpets sounded with hoarse note' (Virgil, *Aeneid*, VIII, 2)

22 Well said: well done

25 'Low: a cry to urge on dogs

19 Off . . . spurs: i.e. strip him of his knighthood

OTTER Sir Amorous, you must not equivocate. It must be pulled down, for all my cousin. 41

CLERIMONT (*Aside to LA FOOLE*) 'Sfoot, if you take not your drink, they'll think you are discontented with something; you'll betray all, if you take the least notice.

LA FOOLE (*Aside to CLERIMONT*) Not I, I'll both drink and talk then.

OTTER You must pull the horse on his knees, Sir Amorous. Fear no cousins. *Jacta est alea.*

TRUEWIT (*Aside to DAUPHINE and CLERIMONT*) Oh, now he's in his vein, and bold. The least hint given him of his wife now will make him rail desperately. 52

CLERIMONT Speak to him of her.

TRUEWIT Do you, and I'll fetch her to the hearing of it. *Exit*

DAUPHINE Captain he-Otter, your she-Otter is coming, your wife.

OTTER Wife! Buz. *Titivilitium*. There's no such thing in nature. I confess, gentlemen, I have a cook, a laundress, a house-drudge, that serves my necessary turns, and goes under that title; but he's an ass that will be so uxorious to tie his affections to one circle. Come, the name dulls appetite. Here, replenish again: another bout. Wives are nasty, sluttish animals. *Fills the cups*

DAUPHINE Oh, captain! 65

OTTER As ever the earth bare, *tribus verbis*. Where's Master Truewit?

DAW He's slipped aside, sir.

CLERIMONT But you must drink and be jovial.

DAW Yes, give it me. 70

LA FOOLE And me too.

DAW Let's be jovial.

LA FOOLE As jovial as you will.

OTTER Agreed. Now you shall ha' the bear, cousin, and Sir John Daw the horse, and I'll ha' the bull still. Sound, Tritons o' the Thames. *Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero—*

MOROSE *speaks from above, the trumpets sounding*

MOROSE Villains, murderers, sons of the earth, and traitors, what do you there?

49 *Jacta est alea*: 'The die is cast': Caesar's words on crossing the Rubicon

57 Buz: exclamation of impatience  
*Titivilitium*: a vile thing of no value (from Plautus, *Casina*, 347)

60-1 ass . . . circle: 'like a donkey driving a rotary mill' (Holdsworth); with pun on 'circle' meaning female genitalia

66 *tribus verbis*: in three words; i.e. briefly

76 Tritons: classical sea gods who blew shell-trumpets

76-7 *Nunc . . . libero*: 'Now is the time for drinking, now with free foot . . .' (Horace, *Odes*, I.xxxvii.1)

78 sons of earth: bastards (Latin *terrae filii*); base-born

CLERIMONT Oh, now the trumpets have waked him, we shall have his company. 81

OTTER A wife is a scurvy clogdogdo; an unlucky thing, a very foresaid bear-whelp, without any good fashion or breeding: *mala bestia*.

*His wife is brought out to hear him by TRUEWIT*

DAUPHINE Why did you marry one then, captain?

OTTER A pox—I married with six thousand pound, I. I was in love with that. I ha' not kissed my Fury these forty weeks.

CLERIMONT The more to blame you, captain.

TRUEWIT Nay, Mistress Otter, hear him a little first. 90

OTTER She has a breath worse than my grandmother's, *profecto*.

MISTRESS OTTER Oh treacherous liar! Kiss me, sweet Master Truewit, and prove him a slandering knave.

TRUEWIT I'll rather believe you, lady.

OTTER And she has a peruke that's like a pound of hemp made up in shoe-threads.

MISTRESS OTTER Oh viper, mandrake!

OTTER A most vile face! And yet she spends me forty pound a year in mercury and hogs' bones. All her teeth were made i' the Blackfriars, both her eyebrows i' the Strand, and her hair in Silver Street. Every part o' the town owns a piece of her. 103

MISTRESS OTTER I cannot hold.

OTTER She takes herself asunder still when she goes to bed, into some twenty boxes; and about next day noon is put together again, like a great German clock; and so comes forth and rings a tedious larum to the whole house, and then is quiet again for an hour, but for her quarters. Ha' you done me right, gentlemen? 111

MISTRESS OTTER No, sir, I'll do you right with my quarters, with my quarters.

*She falls upon him and beats him*

OTTER Oh hold, good princess!

TRUEWIT Sound, sound. *Drum and trumpets sound*

CLERIMONT A battle, a battle.

82 clogdogdo: obscure; some eds suggest 'clog fit for a dog' ('clog' meaning weight placed around dog's neck when training it)

83 very foresaid: truly predictable (eds)

84 *mala bestia*: evil beast

92 *profecto*: truly

98 mandrake: poisonous plant whose root was said to resemble a human form; a common term of abuse

100 mercury and hogs' bones: used in cosmetics

100-8 derived from Martial, *Epigrams*, IX.xxxvii.1-6

107-8 German clock: i.e. always in need of repair; the comparison is made frequently in Jacobean drama

108 larum: alarm

110 quarters: a) quarter hours, b) living quarters

done me right: 'matched me drink for drink (a set phrase)' (Holdsworth)

113 quarters: blows (in fencing)

MISTRESS OTTER You notorious stinkardly bearward,  
 does my breath smell?  
 OTTER Under correction, dear princess. Look to my  
 bear, and my horse, gentlemen. **120**  
 MISTRESS OTTER Do I want teeth, and eyebrows, thou  
 bull-dog?  
 TRUEWIT Sound, sound still. *They sound again*  
 OTTER No, I protest, under correction—  
 MISTRESS OTTER Ay, now you are under correction,  
 you protest; but you did not protest before correction,  
 sir. Thou Judas, to offer to betray thy princess! I'll  
 make thee an example—

*MOROSE descends with a long sword*  
 MOROSE I will have no such examples in my house,  
 Lady Otter. **130**

MISTRESS OTTER Ah—  
 MOROSE Mistress Mary Ambree, your examples are  
 dangerous. *(She runs off, followed by DAW and*  
*LA FOOLE)* Rogues, hell-hounds, Stentors, out of my  
 doors, you sons of noise and tumult, begot on an ill  
 May Day, or when the galley-foist is afloat to  
 Westminster! *(Drives out the MUSICIANS)*  
 A trumpeter could not be conceived but then!

DAUPHINE What ails you, sir? **139**  
 MOROSE They have rent my roof, walls, and all my  
 windows asunder, with their brazen throats. *Exit*

TRUEWIT Best follow him, Dauphine. *Exit*  
 DAUPHINE So I will.  
 CLERIMONT Where's Daw and La Foole?

OTTER They are both run away, sir. Good gentlemen,  
 help to pacify my princess, and speak to the great  
 ladies for me. Now must I go lie with the bears this  
 fortnight, and keep out o' the way, till my peace be  
 made, for this scandal she has taken. Did you not see  
 my bull-head, gentlemen? **150**

CLERIMONT Is't not on, captain?  
 TRUEWIT No:—*(Aside to CLERIMONT)* but he may  
 make a new one, by that is on.  
 OTTER Oh, here 'tis. And you come over, gentlemen,

119 Under correction: see III.i.109

124 protest: avow

132 Mary Ambree: according to a ballad, she disguised herself  
 as a soldier and took part in the siege of Ghent in 1584

134 Stentors: Stentor was a Greek warrior in the Trojan War,  
 whose voice was as powerful as those of fifty men

135–6 ill May Day: reference to the May Day riot of 1517,  
 though any May Day, with its noisy festivities, would  
 have been a torment to Morose

136 galley-foist: state barge which annually took the Lord  
 Mayor to Westminster to be sworn in; again  
 accompanied by noisy celebrations

149 scandal: offence

150 bull-head: cover for the cup

153 by that: by copying the one that is on: i.e. Otter's own  
 head, with its cuckold's horns, would provide an apt  
 model for a replacement

and ask for Tom Otter, we'll go down to Ratcliffe,  
 and have a course i' faith, for all these disasters.  
 There's *bona spes* left.

TRUEWIT Away, captain, get off while you are well. *Exit OTTER*

CLERIMONT I am glad we are rid of him. **159**

TRUEWIT You had never been, unless we had put his  
 wife upon him. His humour is as tedious at last, as it  
 was ridiculous at first.

## Act IV, scene iii

*Enter HAUGHTY, MISTRESS OTTER, MAVIS, DAW, LA  
 FOOLE, CENTAURE, EPICOENE. TRUEWIT and  
 CLERIMONT move aside and observe*

HAUGHTY We wondered why you shrieked so, Mistress  
 Otter.

MISTRESS OTTER Oh God, madam, he came down  
 with a huge long naked weapon in both his hands,  
 and looked so dreadfully! Sure he's beside himself.

MAVIS Why, what made you there, Mistress Otter?

MISTRESS OTTER Alas, Mistress Mavis, I was  
 chastising my subject, and thought nothing of him.

DAW *(To EPICOENE)* Faith, mistress, you must do so  
 too. Learn to chastise. Mistress Otter corrects her  
 husband so, he dares not speak but under correction.

LA FOOLE And with his hat off to her: 'twould do you  
 good to see. **13**

HAUGHTY In sadness, 'tis good and mature counsel:  
 practise it, Morose. I'll call you Morose still now, as I  
 call Centaure and Mavis: we four will be all one.

CENTAURE And you'll come to the college and live with  
 us?

HAUGHTY Make him give milk and honey.

MAVIS Look how you manage him at first, you shall  
 have him ever after. **21**

CENTAURE Let him allow you your coach and four  
 horses, your woman, your chambermaid, your page,  
 your gentleman-usher, your French cook, and four  
 grooms.

HAUGHTY And go with us to Bedlam, to the china-  
 houses, and to the Exchange.

CENTAURE It will open the gate to your fame.

155 Ratcliffe: suburb of London outside the jurisdiction of  
 the city authorities; hence, a refuge for rogues

156 course: see IV.ii.9n

157 *bona spes*: good hope

6 made you: were you doing

14 In sadness: seriously

15 Morose: i.e. the masculine form of address

19 milk and honey: as found in the Promised Land; i.e.  
 everything you could want

20 manage: handle (as of horses)

26–7 china-houses . . . Exchange: see I.iii.35n, 40n

HAUGHTY Here's Centaure has immortalized herself,  
with taming of her wild male. 30  
MAVIS Ay, she has done the miracle of the kingdom.  
EPICOENE But ladies, do you count it lawful to have  
such plurality of servants, and do 'em all graces?  
HAUGHTY Why not? Why should women deny their  
favours to men? Are they the poorer, or the worse?  
DAW Is the Thames the less for the dyer's water,  
mistress?  
LA FOOLE Or a torch, for lighting many torches?  
TRUEWIT (*Aside*) Well said, La Foole; what a new one  
he has got! 40  
CENTAURE They are empty losses women fear in this  
kind.  
HAUGHTY Besides, ladies should be mindful of the  
approach of age, and let no time want his due use.  
The best of our days pass first.  
MAVIS We are rivers that cannot be called back,  
madam: she that now excludes her lovers may live to  
lie a forsaken beldame, in a frozen bed.  
CENTAURE 'Tis true, Mavis; and who will wait on us to  
coach then? Or write, or tell us the news then? Make  
anagrams of our names, and invite us to the cockpit,  
and kiss our hands all the play-time, and draw their  
weapons for our honours? 53  
HAUGHTY Not one.  
DAW Nay, my mistress is not altogether unintelligent  
of these things; here be in presence have tasted of her  
favours.  
CLERIMONT (*Aside*) What a neighing hobby-horse is this!  
EPICOENE But not with intent to boast 'em again,  
servant. And have you those excellent receipts,  
madam, to keep yourselves from bearing of children?  
HAUGHTY Oh yes, Morose. How should we maintain  
our youth and beauty else? Many births of a woman  
make her old, as many crops make the earth barren.

## Act IV, scene iv

*Enter MOROSE, DAUPHINE; they speak apart*

MOROSE Oh my cursed angel, that instructed me to  
this fate!  
DAUPHINE Why, sir?

- 32–64 derived from Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, III  
36–8 Is the . . . torches: clichés, here with sexual connotations  
(‘in sexual slang *water* meant semen, *torch* penis, and *burn*  
infect with venereal disease’ (Holdsworth))  
39 new one: i.e. original turn of phrase  
48 beldame: hag  
51 cockpit: probably the Cockpit, a small private theatre in  
Whitehall, where cock-fights as well as plays were staged  
(see Introduction); with a sexual innuendo  
58 hobby-horse: buffoon  
60 receipts: formulas, prescriptions  
1 instructed: directed

MOROSE That I should be seduced by so foolish a devil  
as a barber will make!  
DAUPHINE I would I had been worthy, sir, to have  
partaken your counsel; you should never have trusted  
it to such a minister.  
MOROSE Would I could redeem it with the loss of an  
eye, nephew, a hand, or any other member. 10  
DAUPHINE Marry, God forbid, sir, that you should geld  
yourself, to anger your wife.  
MOROSE So it would rid me of her! And that I did  
supererogatory penance, in a belfry, at Westminster  
Hall, i' the cockpit, at the fall of a stag, the Tower  
Wharf (what place is there else?), London Bridge,  
Paris Garden, Billingsgate, when the noises are at  
their height and loudest. Nay, I would sit out a play  
that were nothing but fights at sea, drum, trumpet,  
and target! 20  
DAUPHINE I hope there shall be no such need, sir. Take  
patience, good uncle. This is but a day, and 'tis well  
worn too now.  
MOROSE Oh, 'twill be so forever, nephew, I foresee it,  
forever. Strife and tumult are the dowry that comes  
with a wife.  
TRUEWIT I told you so, sir, and you would not believe  
me.  
MOROSE Alas, do not rub those wounds, Master  
Truewit, to blood again; 'twas my negligence. Add  
not affliction to affliction. I have perceived the effect  
of it, too late, in Madam Otter. 32  
EPICOENE (*Coming forward*) How do you, sir?  
MOROSE Did you ever hear a more unnecessary  
question? As if she did not see! Why, I do as you see,  
empress, empress.  
EPICOENE You are not well, sir! You look very ill!  
Something has distempered you.  
MOROSE Oh horrible, monstrous impertinencies!  
Would not one of these have served? Do you think,  
sir? Would not one of these have served? 41

- 14 supererogatory: beyond the call of duty  
14–15 Westminster Hall: had shops and law courts, and  
therefore crowds  
15 cockpit: see IV.iii.51n  
fall of a stag: accompanied by barking of hounds and  
sounding of horns  
15–16 Tower Wharf: see I.ii.16n  
17 Paris Garden: a baiting house  
Billingsgate: food market; its fishwives made it a byword  
for raucousness  
18–19 play . . . sea: e.g. Heywood and Rowley's *Fortune by  
Land and Sea* (1609), a romance drama of the kind  
despised by Jonson  
20 target: shield  
38 distempered: upset; also, 'unbalanced' (with regard to the  
humours, or fluids, of which the body was taken to be  
composed)  
39 impertinencies: irrelevances

TRUEWIT Yes, sir, but these are but notes of female kindness, sir; certain tokens that she has a voice, sir.  
 MOROSE Oh, is't so? Come, and't be no otherwise— what say you?  
 EPICOENE How do you feel yourself, sir?  
 MOROSE Again that!  
 TRUEWIT Nay, look you, sir: you would be friends with your wife upon unconscionable terms, her silence—  
 EPICOENE They say you are run mad, sir. 50  
 MOROSE Not for love, I assure you, of you; do you see?  
 EPICOENE Oh lord, gentlemen! Lay hold on him for God's sake. What shall I do? Who's his physician (can you tell?) that knows the state of his body best, that I might send for him? Good sir, speak. I'll send for one of my doctors else.  
 MOROSE What, to poison me, that I might die intestate and leave you possessed of all?  
 EPICOENE Lord, how idly he talks, and how his eyes sparkle! He looks green about the temples! Do you see what blue spots he has? 61  
 CLERIMONT Ay, it's melancholy.  
 EPICOENE Gentlemen, for heaven's sake counsel me. Ladies! Servant, you have read Pliny and Paracelsus: ne'er a word now to comfort a poor gentlewoman? Ay me! What fortune had I to marry a distracted man?  
 DAW I'll tell you, mistress—  
 TRUEWIT (*Aside*) How rarely she holds it up!  
 MOROSE What mean you, gentlemen?  
 EPICOENE What will you tell me, servant? 70  
 DAW The disease in Greek is called *μανία*, in Latin *insania, furor, vel ecstasis melancholica*, that is, *egressio*, when a man *ex melancholico evadit fanaticus*.  
 MOROSE Shall I have a lecture read upon me alive?  
 DAW But he may be but *phreneticus* yet, mistress, and *phrenetis* is only *delirium*, or so—

42 notes: signs

43 kindness: a) concern b) behaviour natural to her kind (i.e. women)

49 unconscionable: unreasonable, unjust

59–61 how idly . . . he has: 'symptoms of madness comically ascribed to Menaechmus of Epidamnus in Plautus's *Menaechmi*, 829–30' (Procter)

62 melancholy: irritability; also, in original Greek sense, frenzy, madness (eds)

64 Pliny: AD 23–79; a Roman, author of *Historia Naturalis* Paracelsus: 1493–154; Swiss scientist and authority on medicine71 *μανία*: mania, madness72–3 *insania* . . . *fanaticus*: 'madness . . . insanity, frenzy, or melancholic ecstasy . . . a going out of one's mind . . . from a state of melancholy becomes mad'

74 Shall I . . . alive?: i.e. shall I be treated like a cadaver in an anatomy class whilst I'm still alive?

75 *phreneticus*: suffering from *phrenitis*: inflammation of the brain76 *delirium*: temporary mental disturbance

EPICOENE Ay, that is for the disease, servant; but what is this to the cure? We are sure enough of the disease.  
 MOROSE Let me go! 79  
 TRUEWIT Why, we'll entreat her to hold her peace, sir.  
 MOROSE Oh no. Labour not to stop her. She is like a conduit-pipe, that will gush out with more force when she opens again.  
 HAUGHTY I'll tell you, Morose, you must talk divinity to him altogether, or moral philosophy.  
 LA FOOLE Ay, and there's an excellent book of moral philosophy, madam, of Reynard the Fox, and all the beasts, called *Doni's Philosophy*.  
 CENTAURE There is, indeed, Sir Amorous La Foole.  
 MOROSE Oh misery! 90  
 LA FOOLE I have read it, my Lady Centaure, all over to my cousin here.  
 MISTRESS OTTER Ay, and 'tis a very good book as any is, of the moderns.  
 DAW Tut, he must have Seneca read to him, and Plutarch and the ancients; the moderns are not for this disease.  
 CLERIMONT Why, you discommended them too today, Sir John.  
 DAW Ay, in some cases; but in these they are best, and Aristotle's *Ethics*. 101  
 MAVIS Say you so, Sir John? I think you are deceived: you took it upon trust.  
 HAUGHTY Where's Trusty, my woman? I'll end this difference. I prithee, Otter, call her. Her father and mother were both mad when they put her to me.  
 Exit MISTRESS OTTER  
 MOROSE I think so.—Nay, gentlemen, I am tame. This is but an exercise, I know, a marriage ceremony, which I must endure.  
 HAUGHTY And one of 'em (I know not which) was cured with *The Sick Man's Salve*; and the other with Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*. 112  
 TRUEWIT A very cheap cure, madam.  
 HAUGHTY Ay, it's very feasible.

85 altogether: uninterruptedly

88 *Doni's Philosophy*: collection of oriental beast fables, translated from Antonio Francesco Doni's Italian version into English by Sir Thomas North as *The Moral Philosophy of Doni* (1570); the fable of Reynard the Fox is not included

106 put her to me: put her in my charge

108 exercise: a) test, trial, as of saint or martyr; b) performance of a ceremony; c) training, as of an animal

111 *The Sick Man's Salve*: popular religious tract by Thomas Becon, urging patience and humility in times of illness; seventeen editions appeared between 1561 and 1632112 Greene's . . . *Wit*: dramatist Robert Greene's popular confessional and admonitory pamphlet of 1592, written on his death-bed

113 cheap: 'a groat (the cost of the pamphlet) = fourpence' (Procter)

*Enter* MISTRESS OTTER *with* TRUSTY

MISTRESS OTTER My lady called for you, Mistress Trusty; you must decide a controversy.  
 HAUGHTY Oh, Trusty, which was it you said, your father or your mother, that was cured with *The Sick Man's Salve*?  
 TRUSTY My mother, madam, with the *Salve*. 120  
 TRUEWIT Then it was *The Sick Woman's Salve*.  
 TRUSTY And my father with the *Groatsworth of Wit*. But there was other means used: we had a preacher that would preach folk asleep still; and so they were prescribed to go to church, by an old woman that was their physician, thrice a week—  
 EPICOENE To sleep?  
 TRUSTY Yes, forsooth; and every night they read themselves asleep on those books.  
 EPICOENE Good faith, it stands with great reason. I would I knew where to procure those books. 131  
 MOROSE Oh.  
 LA FOOLE I can help you with one of 'em, Mistress Morose, the *Groatsworth of Wit*.  
 EPICOENE But I shall disfurnish you, Sir Amorous; can you spare it?  
 LA FOOLE Oh, yes, for a week or so; I'll read it myself to him.  
 EPICOENE No, I must do that, sir; that must be my office. 140  
 MOROSE Oh, oh!  
 EPICOENE Sure, he would do well enough, if he could sleep.  
 MOROSE No, I should do well enough if you could sleep. Have I no friend that will make her drunk? Or give her a little laudanum, or opium?  
 TRUEWIT Why, sir, she talks ten times worse in her sleep.  
 MOROSE How!  
 CLERIMONT Do you not know that, sir? Never ceases all night. 150  
 TRUEWIT And snores like a porcpisce.  
 MOROSE Oh, redeem me, fate, redeem me, fate! For how many causes may a man be divorced, nephew?  
 DAUPHINE I know not truly, sir.  
 TRUEWIT Some divine must resolve you in that, sir, or canon lawyer.  
 MOROSE I will not rest, I will not think of any other hope or comfort, till I know.

*Exeunt* MOROSE and DAUPHINE

CLERIMONT Alas, poor man.  
 TRUEWIT You'll make him mad indeed, ladies, if you pursue this. 161  
 HAUGHTY No, we'll let him breathe, now, a quarter of

124 still: always  
 135 disfurnish: deprive  
 151 porcpisce: porpoise (Latin *porcus piscis*, pig fish)  
 156 canon lawyer: specialises in ecclesiastical law

an hour or so.  
 CLERIMONT By my faith, a large truce.  
 HAUGHTY Is that his keeper, that is gone with him?  
 DAW It is his nephew, madam.  
 LA FOOLE Sir Dauphine Eugenie.  
 CENTAURE He looks like a very pitiful knight—  
 DAW As can be. This marriage has put him out of all.  
 LA FOOLE He has not a penny in his purse, madam—  
 DAW He is ready to cry all this day. 171  
 LA FOOLE A very shark, he set me i' the nick t'other night at primero.  
 TRUEWIT (*Aside*) How these swabbers talk!  
 CLERIMONT (*Aside*) Ay, Otter's wine has swelled their humours above a spring-tide.  
 HAUGHTY Good Morose, let's go in again. I like your couches exceeding well: we'll go lie, and talk there.  
 EPICOENE I wait on you, madam. 179  
*Exeunt all but* EPICOENE, TRUEWIT, CLERIMONT  
 TRUEWIT 'Slight, I will have 'em as silent as signs, and their posts too, ere I ha' done. Do you hear, lady bride? I pray thee now, as thou art a noble wench, continue this discourse of Dauphine within; but praise him exceedingly. Magnify him with all the height of affection thou canst (I have some purpose in't) and but beat off these two rooks, Jack Daw and his fellow, with any discontentment hither, and I'll honour thee forever.  
 EPICOENE I was about it, here. It angered me to the soul to hear 'em begin to talk so malapert. 190  
 TRUEWIT Pray thee perform it, and thou winn'st me an idolater to thee everlasting.  
 EPICOENE Will you go in, and hear me do it?  
 TRUEWIT No, I'll stay here. Drive 'em out of your company, 'tis all I ask; which cannot be any way better done than by extolling Dauphine, whom they have so slighted.  
 EPICOENE I warrant you: you shall expect one of 'em presently. *Exit*  
 CLERIMONT What a cast of kastrils are these, to hawk after ladies thus? 201  
 TRUEWIT Ay, and strike at such an eagle as Dauphine.  
 CLERIMONT He will be mad when we tell him. Here he comes.

165 keeper: as if he were a lunatic  
 172 shark: cheat  
 set . . . nick: unclear; Holdsworth suggests it means 'cleaned me out', with La Foole muddling terms from Primero (a card game) with hazard (a dice game): with 'set' meaning bet against, and 'nick' being the winning score in hazard  
 174 swabbers: low fellows  
 187 discontentment: annoyance  
 190 malapert: impudently  
 200 cast of kastrils: pair of kestrels. 'Kastril' was a term of contempt; see I.iv.83n



## Act IV, scene v

*Enter* DAUPHINE

CLERIMONT Oh sir, you are welcome.

TRUEWIT Where's thine uncle?

DAUPHINE Run out o' doors in's night-caps, to talk with a casuist about his divorce. It works admirably.

TRUEWIT Thou wouldst ha' said so, and thou hadst been here! The ladies have laughed at thee, most comically, since thou went'st, Dauphine.

CLERIMONT And asked if thou wert thine uncle's keeper?

TRUEWIT And the brace of baboons answered yes, and said thou wert a pitiful poor fellow, and didst live upon posts; and hadst nothing but three suits of apparel, and some few benevolences that lords ga' thee to fool to 'em, and swagger. <sup>9</sup>

DAUPHINE Let me not live, I'll beat 'em. I'll bind 'em both to grand madam's bed-posts and have 'em baited with monkeys.

TRUEWIT Thou shalt not need, they shall be beaten to thy hand, Dauphine. I have an execution to serve upon 'em, I warrant thee, shall serve; trust my plot. <sup>20</sup>

DAUPHINE Ay, you have many plots! So you had one, to make all the wenches in love with me.

TRUEWIT Why, if I do not yet afore night, as near as 'tis; and that they do not every one invite thee, and be ready to scratch for thee, take the mortgage of my wit.

CLERIMONT 'Fore God, I'll be his witness; thou shalt have it, Dauphine; thou shalt be his fool forever if thou dost not. <sup>29</sup>

TRUEWIT Agreed. Perhaps 'twill be the better estate. Do you observe this gallery, or rather lobby, indeed? Here are a couple of studies, at each end one: here will I act such a tragicomedy between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, Daw and La Foole—which of 'em comes out first will I seize on (you two shall be the chorus behind the arras, and whip out between

the acts and speak). If I do not make 'em keep the peace for this remnant of the day, if not of the year, I have failed once—I hear Daw coming: hide, and do not laugh, for God's sake. <sup>40</sup>DAUPHINE and CLERIMONT *hide**Enter* DAW

DAW Which is the way into the garden, trow?

TRUEWIT Oh, Jack Daw! I am glad I have met with you. In good faith, I must have this matter go no further between you. I must ha' it taken up.

DAW What matter, sir? Between whom?

TRUEWIT Come, you disguise it—Sir Amorous and you. If you love me, Jack, you shall make use of your philosophy now, for this once, and deliver me your sword. This is not the wedding the centaurs were at, though there be a she-one here. The bride has entreated me I will see no blood shed at her bridal; you saw her whisper me erewhile. *Takes his sword*DAW As I hope to finish Tacitus, I intend no murder. <sup>53</sup>

TRUEWIT Do you not wait for Sir Amorous?

DAW Not I, by my knighthood.

TRUEWIT And your scholarship too?

DAW And my scholarship too.

TRUEWIT Go to, then I return you your sword, and ask you mercy; but put it not up, for you will be assaulted. I understood that you had apprehended it, and walked here to brave him; and that you had held your life contemptible, in regard of your honour. <sup>62</sup>

DAW No, no, no such thing, I assure you. He and I parted now as good friends as could be.

TRUEWIT Trust not you to that visor. I saw him since dinner with another face: I have known many men in my time vexed with losses, with deaths, and with abuses, but so offended a wight as Sir Amorous did I never see, or read of. For taking away his guests, sir, today, that's the cause; and he declares it behind your back, with such threat'nings and contempts—he said to Dauphine you were the arrant'st ass— <sup>72</sup>

DAW Ay, he may say his pleasure.

<sup>4</sup> casuist: theologian who resolves cases of conscience<sup>7</sup> comically: derisively; also, in a comical manner<sup>12</sup> upon posts: by running errands

three suits: see III.i.41–2n

<sup>18–19</sup> to thy hand: for you<sup>19</sup> execution: legal writ<sup>25</sup> scratch: fight<sup>33</sup> tragicomedy: Holdsworth notes that this was a new form of drama, introduced by Beaumont and Fletcher at around this time; the suggestion is that such a hybrid, unclassical form deserves principal actors like Daw and La Foole<sup>33–4</sup> Guelphs . . . Ghibellines: rival political factions in medieval Italy<sup>36</sup> arras: thick tapestry, hanging across a recess at the back of the stage<sup>41</sup> trow: do you think<sup>42–3</sup> compare the ensuing trick on Daw and La Foole with the duel engineered by Sir Toby Belch between the reluctant antagonists Viola and Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* (1601), III.ii and III.iv<sup>44</sup> taken up: made up<sup>49</sup> This . . . at: at the marriage of Peirithous and Hippodamia, a drunken centaur's attempt to rape the bride resulted in a bloody battle<sup>50</sup> she-one: there were no female centaurs in classical myth<sup>53</sup> Tacitus: prolific Roman historian<sup>59</sup> put it not up: do not sheathe it<sup>65</sup> visor: mask<sup>68</sup> wight: man (archaic)<sup>70</sup> cause: subject of the dispute

TRUEWIT And swears you are so protested a coward that he knows you will never do him any manly or single right, and therefore he will take his course.  
 DAW I'll give him any satisfaction, sir—but fighting.  
 TRUEWIT Ay, sir, but who knows what satisfaction he'll take? Blood he thirsts for, and blood he will have; and whereabouts on you he will have it, who knows, but himself? **81**  
 DAW I pray you, Master Truewit, be you a mediator.  
 TRUEWIT Well, sir, conceal yourself then in this study till I return. (*He puts him up behind a door*) Nay, you must be content to be locked in; for, for mine own reputation, I would not have you seen to receive a public disgrace, while I have the matter in managing. Gods so, here he comes: keep your breath close, that he do not hear you sigh.—In good faith, Sir Amorous, he is not this way; I pray you be merciful, do not murder him; he is a Christian as good as you; you are armed as if you sought a revenge on all his race. Good Dauphine, get him away from this place. I never knew a man's cholera so high but he would speak to his friends, he would hear reason.—Jack Daw. Jack Daw! Asleep? **96**  
 DAW Is he gone, Master Truewit?  
 TRUEWIT Ay, did you hear him?  
 DAW Oh God, yes.  
 TRUEWIT (*Aside*) What a quick ear fear has! **100**  
 DAW (*Coming out*) But is he so armed, as you say?  
 TRUEWIT Armed? Did you ever see a fellow set out to take possession?  
 DAW Ay, sir.  
 TRUEWIT That may give you some light to conceive of him; but 'tis nothing to the principal. Some false brother i' the house has furnished him strangely. Or, if it were out o' the house, it was Tom Otter.  
 DAW Indeed, he's a captain, and his wife is his kinswoman. **110**  
 TRUEWIT He has got somebody's old two-hand sword, to mow you off at the knees. And that sword hath spawned such a dagger!—But then he is so hung with pikes, halberds, petronels, calivers, and muskets, that he looks like a justice of peace's hall; a man of two thousand a year is not sessed at so many weapons as

74 protested: declared  
 75-6 do . . . right: 'grant him the right to meet you man-to-man in an honourable duel' (Holdsworth)  
 103 take possession: of his property, when ownership was in dispute; this often required force, or the threat of it  
 106 principal: original  
 107 brother: associate  
 114 halberds: spears-cum-battle-axes  
 petronels: large pistols  
 calivers: light muskets  
 116 sessed: assessed (for provision of weapons to the monarch)

he has on. There was never fencer challenged at so many several foils. You would think he meant to murder all Saint Pulchre's parish. If he could but victual himself for half a year in his breeches, he is sufficiently armed to overrun a country. **121**  
 DAW Good lord, what means he, sir! I pray you, Master Truewit, be you a mediator.  
 TRUEWIT Well, I'll try if he will be appeased with a leg or an arm; if not, you must die once.  
 DAW I would be loth to lose my right arm, for writing madrigals.  
 TRUEWIT Why, if he will be satisfied with a thumb, or a little finger, all's one to me. You must think I'll do my best. **130**  
 DAW Good sir, do.  
*He puts him up again, and then DAUPHINE and CLERIMONT come forth*  
 CLERIMONT What hast thou done?  
 TRUEWIT He will let me do nothing, man, he does all afore me; he offers his left arm.  
 CLERIMONT His left wing, for a Jack Daw.  
 DAUPHINE Take it, by all means.  
 TRUEWIT How! Maim a man forever, for a jest? What a conscience hast thou?  
 DAUPHINE 'Tis no loss to him: he has no employment for his arms but to eat spoon-meat. Beside, as good maim his body as his reputation. **141**  
 TRUEWIT He is a scholar, and a wit, and yet he does not think so. But he loses no reputation with us, for we all resolved him an ass before. To your places again.  
 CLERIMONT I pray thee, let me be in at the other a little.  
 TRUEWIT Look, you'll spoil all: these be ever your tricks.  
 CLERIMONT No, but I could hit of some things that thou wilt miss, and thou wilt say are good ones. **151**  
 TRUEWIT I warrant you. I pray forbear, I'll leave it off else.  
 DAUPHINE Come away, Clerimont. *They hide*  
*Enter LA FOOLE*  
 TRUEWIT Sir Amorous!

117-18 at . . . foils: to fight with so many different kinds of sword  
 119 Saint Pulchre's: St Sepulchre's was a large and crowded London parish  
 120 breeches: known as 'slops', it was the fashion at the time for these to be voluminous  
 125 once: once for all  
 140 spoon-meat: baby food  
 143 so: i.e. 'that his body might as well be maimed' (Holdsworth)  
 144 resolved him: decided he was

LA FOOLE Master Truewit.  
 TRUEWIT Whither were you going?  
 LA FOOLE Down into the court, to make water.  
 TRUEWIT By no means, sir; you shall rather tempt your breeches. **160**  
 LA FOOLE Why, sir?  
 TRUEWIT (*Opening the other door*) Enter here, if you love your life.  
 LA FOOLE Why? Why?  
 TRUEWIT Question till your throat be cut, do; dally till the enraged soul find you.  
 LA FOOLE Who's that?  
 TRUEWIT Daw it is; will you in?  
 LA FOOLE Ay, ay, I'll in; what's the matter?  
 TRUEWIT Nay, if he had been cool enough to tell us that, there had been some hope to atone you, but he seems so implacably enraged. **172**  
 LA FOOLE 'Slight, let him rage. I'll hide myself.  
 TRUEWIT Do, good sir. But what have you done to him within, that should provoke him thus? You have broke some jest upon him afore the ladies—  
 LA FOOLE Not I, never in my life broke jest upon any man. The bride was praising Sir Dauphine, and he went away in snuff, and I followed him, unless he took offence at me in his drink erewhile, that I would not pledge all the horse-full. **181**  
 TRUEWIT By my faith, and that may be, you remember well; but he walks the round up and down, through every room o' the house, with a towel in his hand, crying, 'Where's La Foole? Who saw La Foole?' and when Dauphine and I demanded the cause, we can force no answer from him but 'Oh revenge, how sweet art thou! I will strangle him in this towel'—which leads us to conjecture that the main cause of his fury is for bringing your meat today, with a towel about you, to his discredit. **191**  
 LA FOOLE Like enough. Why, and he be angry for that, I'll stay here, till his anger be blown over.  
 TRUEWIT A good becoming resolution, sir. If you can put it on o' the sudden.  
 LA FOOLE Yes, I can put it on. Or I'll away into the country presently.  
 TRUEWIT How will you get out o' the house, sir? He knows you are i' the house, and he'll watch you this

159–60 tempt your breeches: 'test (the capacity of) your breeches' (Procter)

171 atone: reconcile

176 broke . . . him: made some joke about him

179 in snuff: indignantly

181 pledge: take my turn and drink: see IV.ii.28

183 walks the round: a military metaphor from the patrol which goes round a camp or fortress to check that the sentries are vigilant (eds)

195 put it on: a) adopt; b) feign, assume

199 watch: watch out for

se'en-night but he'll have you. He'll outwait a sergeant for you. **201**  
 LA FOOLE Why, then I'll stay here.  
 TRUEWIT You must think how to victual yourself in time, then.  
 LA FOOLE Why, sweet Master Truewit, will you entreat my cousin Otter to send me a cold venison pasty, a bottle or two of wine, and a chamber-pot?  
 TRUEWIT A stool were better, sir, of Sir A-jax his invention.  
 LA FOOLE Ay, that will be better indeed; and a pallet to lie on. **211**  
 TRUEWIT Oh, I would not advise you to sleep by any means.  
 LA FOOLE Would you not, sir? Why, then I will not.  
 TRUEWIT Yet there's another fear—  
 LA FOOLE Is there, sir? What is't?  
 TRUEWIT No, he cannot break open this door with his foot, sure.  
 LA FOOLE I'll set my back against it, sir. I have a good back. **220**  
 TRUEWIT But then if he should batter.  
 LA FOOLE Batter! If he dare, I'll have an action of battery against him.  
 TRUEWIT Cast you the worst. He has sent for powder already, and what he will do with it, no man knows: perhaps blow up the corner o' the house where he suspects you are. Here he comes! In, quickly. (*He feigns as if one were present, to fright the other, who is run in to hide himself*) I protest, Sir John Daw, he is not this way. What will you do? Before God, you shall hang no petard here. I'll die rather. Will you not take my word? I never knew one but would be satisfied.—Sir Amorous, there's no standing out. He has made a petard of an old brass pot, to force your door. Think upon some satisfaction, or terms, to offer him. **236**  
 LA FOOLE (*Within*) Sir, I'll give him any satisfaction. I dare give any terms.  
 TRUEWIT You'll leave it to me then?  
 LA FOOLE Ay, sir. I'll stand to any conditions.  
 TRUEWIT *calls forth* CLERIMONT and DAUPHINE  
 TRUEWIT How now, what think you, sirs? Were't not a difficult thing to determine which of these two feared most?  
 CLERIMONT Yes, but this fears the bravest; the other a

201 sergeant: officer with power of arrest

208 A-jax: reference to Sir John Harington's treatise on the flushing toilet, *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596), with its pun on 'a jakes' (a privy)

210 pallet: straw mattress

224 Cast: forecast, anticipate

231 petard: small bomb, mine

233 standing out: resisting, withstanding

whiniling dastard, Jack Daw! But La Foole, a brave heroic coward! And is afraid in a great look and a stout accent. I like him rarely.

TRUEWIT Had it not been pity these two should ha' been concealed?

CLERIMONT Shall I make a motion? **250**

TRUEWIT Briefly. For I must strike while 'tis hot.

CLERIMONT Shall I go fetch the ladies to the catastrophe?

TRUEWIT Umh? Ay, by my troth.

DAUPHINE By no mortal means. Let them continue in the state of ignorance, and err still: think 'em wits and fine fellows, as they have done. 'Twere sin to reform them.

TRUEWIT Well, I will have 'em fetched, now I think on't, for a private purpose of mine; do, Clerimont, fetch 'em, and discourse to 'em all that's past and bring 'em into the gallery here. **262**

DAUPHINE This is thy extreme vanity now, thou think'st thou wert undone, if every jest thou mak'st were not published.

TRUEWIT Thou shalt see how unjust thou art presently. Clerimont, say it was Dauphine's plot. (*Exit CLERIMONT*) Trust me not if the whole drift be not for thy good. There's a carpet i' the next room; put it on, with this scarf over thy face and a cushion o' thy head, and be ready when I call Amorous. Away— (*Exit DAUPHINE*) John Daw! **272**  
*Brings DAW out of study*

DAW What good news, sir?

TRUEWIT Faith, I have followed, and argued with him hard for you. I told him you were a knight, and a scholar; and that you knew fortitude did consist *magis patiendo quam faciendo, magis ferendo quam feriendo*.

DAW It doth so indeed, sir.

TRUEWIT And that you would suffer, I told him: so at first he demanded, by my troth, in my conceit too much. **281**

DAW What was it, sir?

TRUEWIT Your upper lip, and six o' your fore-teeth.

DAW 'Twas unreasonable.

TRUEWIT Nay, I told him plainly, you could not spare 'em all. So after long argument (*pro et con*, as you know) I brought him down to your two butter-teeth, and them he would have.

DAW Oh, did you so? Why, he shall have 'em.

245 whiniling: whimpering, whining  
 250 motion: proposal  
 253 catastrophe: dénouement (of a play)  
 265 published: made widely known  
 269 carpet: tablecloth of tapestry or thick wool  
 276–7 *magis . . . feriendo*: 'more in suffering than in doing, more in enduring than in striking'  
 280 conceit: opinion  
 287 butter-teeth: front teeth

*Enter above* HAUGHTY, CENTAURE, MAVIS, MISTRESS OTTER, EPICOENE, TRUSTY, and CLERIMONT

TRUEWIT But he shall not, sir, by your leave. The conclusion is this, sir, because you shall be very good friends hereafter, and this never to be remembered, or upbraided; besides, that he may not boast he has done any such thing to you in his own person, he is to come here in disguise, give you five kicks in private, sir, take your sword from you, and lock you up in that study, during pleasure. Which will be but a little while, we'll get it released presently. **298**

DAW Five kicks? He shall have six, sir, to be friends.

TRUEWIT Believe me, you shall not overshoot yourself to send him that word by me.

DAW Deliver it, sir. He shall have it with all my heart, to be friends.

TRUEWIT Friends? Nay, and he should not be so, and heartily too, upon these terms, he shall have me to enemy while I live. Come, sir, bear it bravely.

DAW Oh God, sir, 'tis nothing.

TRUEWIT True. What's six kicks to a man that reads Seneca?

DAW I have had a hundred, sir. **310**

TRUEWIT Sir Amorous! No speaking one to another, or rehearsing old matters.  
*DAUPHINE comes forth and kicks him*

DAW One, two, three, four, five. I protest, Sir Amorous, you shall have six.

TRUEWIT Nay, I told you you should not talk. Come, give him six, and he will needs. (*DAUPHINE kicks him again*) Your sword. (*DAW gives TRUEWIT his sword*) Now return to your safe custody: you shall presently meet afore the ladies, and be the dearest friends one to another—(*DAW goes into his study*). Give me the scarf, now, thou shalt beat the other barefaced. Stand by—(*Exit DAUPHINE*). Sir Amorous! **321**  
*Brings out LA FOOLE*

LA FOOLE What's here? A sword!

TRUEWIT I cannot help it, without I should take the quarrel upon myself; here he has sent you his sword—

LA FOOLE I'll receive none on't.

TRUEWIT And he wills you to fasten it against a wall, and break your head in some few several places against the hilts.

LA FOOLE I will not: tell him roundly. I cannot endure to shed my own blood. **330**

TRUEWIT Will you not?

297 during pleasure: for as long as he pleases  
 300 overshoot: overreach  
 321 by: to one side  
 323 without: unless  
 328 several: different  
 330 roundly: plainly

LA FOOLE No. I'll beat it against a fair flat wall, if that will satisfy him; if not, he shall beat it himself, for Amorous.

TRUEWIT Why, this is strange starting off, when a man undertakes for you! I offered him another condition: will you stand to that?

LA FOOLE Ay, what is't?

TRUEWIT That you will be beaten in private. 340

LA FOOLE Yes. I am content, at the blunt.

TRUEWIT Then you must submit yourself to be hoodwinked in this scarf, and be led to him, where he will take your sword from you, and make you bear a blow over the mouth, *gules*, and tweaks by the nose, *sans nombre*.

LA FOOLE I am content. But why must I be blinded?

TRUEWIT That's for your good, sir: because if he should grow insolent upon this and publish it hereafter to your disgrace (which I hope he will not do) you might swear safely and protest he never beat you, to your knowledge. 352

LA FOOLE Oh, I conceive.

TRUEWIT I do not doubt but you'll be perfect good friends upon't, and not dare to utter an ill thought one of another, in future.

LA FOOLE Not I, as God help me, of him.

TRUEWIT Nor he of you, sir. If he should—Come, sir. (*Blindfolds him*) All hid, Sir John.

DAUPHINE *enters to tweak him*

LA FOOLE Oh, Sir John, Sir John! Oh, o-o-o-o-o-Oh— 361

TRUEWIT Good Sir John, leave tweaking, you'll blow his nose off. 'Tis Sir John's pleasure you should retire into the study. Why, now you are friends. All bitterness between you, I hope, is buried; you shall come forth by and by, Damon and Pythias upon't; and embrace with all the rankness of friendship that can be. (*Exit LA FOOLE*) I trust we shall have 'em tamer i' their language hereafter. Dauphine, I worship thee. God's will, the ladies have surprised us!

336 starting off: swerving (said of horses)

337 undertakes: stands surety

341 at the blunt: with the flat of the sword

343 hoodwinked: a) blindfolded; b) fooled

345 *gules*: red; i.e. a bloody mouth; an ironic reference to I.iv.43

346 *sans nombre*: numberless

359 All hid: the cry in hide-and-seek

366 Damon and Pythias: a type of loyal friendship, each offering to die in the place of the other. They were the subject of an eponymous play, by Richard Edwards, published in 1571

367 rankness: a) abundance; b) foulness (Holdsworth)

## Act IV, scene vi

*Enter from above* HAUGHTY, CENTAURE, MAVIS, MISTRESS OTTER, EPICOENE, TRUSTY, and CLERIMONT, *having discovered part of the past scene above*

HAUGHTY Centaure, how our judgements were imposed on by these adulterate knights!

CENTAURE Nay, madam, Mavis was more deceived than we, 'twas her commendation uttered 'em in the college.

MAVIS I commended but their wits, madam, and their braveries. I never looked toward their valours.

HAUGHTY Sir Dauphine is valiant, and a Wit too, it seems?

MAVIS And a Bravery too. 10

HAUGHTY Was this his project?

MISTRESS OTTER So Master Clerimont intimates, madam.

HAUGHTY Good Morose, when you come to the college, will you bring him with you? He seems a very perfect gentleman.

EPICOENE He is so, madam, believe it.

CENTAURE But when will you come, Morose?

EPICOENE Three or four days hence, madam, when I have got me a coach, and horses. 20

HAUGHTY No, tomorrow, good Morose, Centaure shall send you her coach.

MAVIS Yes, faith, do, and bring Sir Dauphine with you.

HAUGHTY She has promised that, Mavis.

MAVIS He is a very worthy gentleman in his exteriors, madam.

HAUGHTY Ay, he shows he is judicial in his clothes.

CENTAURE And yet not so superlatively neat as some, madam, that have their faces set in a brake!

HAUGHTY Ay, and have every hair in form! 30

MAVIS That wear purer linen than ourselves, and profess more neatness than the French hermaphrodite!

EPICOENE Ay, ladies, they, what they tell one of us, have told a thousand, and are the only thieves of our fame; that think to take us with that perfume, or with

2 adulterate: counterfeit

4 uttered: made known; also, put into circulation (as is false currency)

7 braveries: fine clothes

10 Bravery: see I.i.85-6n

29 set in a brake: assume a fixed expression. A brake was a frame in which a horse's hoof was secured whilst being shod

32-3 French hermaphrodite: perhaps indicative only of an assumed general French effeminacy; or perhaps a reference to a current side-show attraction (see *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* III.288), or to Henri III of France (d. 1589), a notorious transvestite

36 fame: reputation

that lace, and laugh at us unconscionably when they have done.

HAUGHTY But Sir Dauphine's carelessness becomes him. 40

CENTAURE I could love a man for such a nose!

MAVIS Or such a leg!

CENTAURE He has an exceeding good eye, madam!

MAVIS And a very good lock!

CENTAURE Good Morose, bring him to my chamber first.

MISTRESS OTTER Please your honours to meet at my house, madam?

TRUEWIT (*Aside to DAUPHINE*) See how they eye thee, man! They are taken, I warrant thee. 50

HAUGHTY You have unbraced our brace of knights here, Master Truewit.

TRUEWIT Not I, madam, it was Sir Dauphine's engine; who, if he have dis furnished your ladyship of any guard or service by it, is able to make the place good again, in himself.

HAUGHTY There's no suspicion of that, sir.

CENTAURE God so, Mavis, Haughty is kissing.

MAVIS Let us go too and take part. 59

HAUGHTY But I am glad of the fortune (beside the discovery of two such empty caskets) to gain the knowledge of so rich a mine of virtue as Sir Dauphine.

CENTAURE We would be all glad to style him of our friendship, and see him at the college.

MAVIS He cannot mix with a sweeter society, I'll prophesy, and I hope he himself will think so. 67

DAUPHINE I should be rude to imagine otherwise, lady.

TRUEWIT (*Aside to DAUPHINE*) Did not I tell thee, Dauphine? Why, all their actions are governed by crude opinion, without reason or cause; they know not why they do anything; but as they are informed, believe, judge, praise, condemn, love, hate, and in emulation one of another, do all these things alike. Only, they have a natural inclination sways 'em generally to the worst, when they are left to themselves. But pursue it, now thou hast 'em. 77

HAUGHTY Shall we go in again, Morose?

EPICOENE Yes, madam.

CENTAURE We'll entreat Sir Dauphine's company.

TRUEWIT Stay, good madam, the interview of the two friends, Pylades and Orestes: I'll fetch 'em out to you straight.

HAUGHTY Will you, Master Truewit?

44 lock: see III.v.75n

51 unbraced: exposed

53 engine: contrivance, device

57 suspicion: doubt

82 Pylades and Orestes: another type of loyal friendship. Pylades helped Orestes avenge the killing of his father, Agamemnon

DAUPHINE Ay, but, noble ladies, do not confess in your countenance or outward bearing to 'em any discovery of their follies, that we may see how they will bear up again, with what assurance, and erection.

HAUGHTY We will not, Sir Dauphine.

CENTAURE *and* MAVIS Upon our honours, Sir Dauphine. 91

TRUEWIT Sir Amorous, Sir Amorous! The ladies are here.

LA FOOLE (*Within*) Are they?

TRUEWIT Yes, but slip out by and by, as their backs are turned, and meet Sir John here, as by chance, when I call you.—Jack Daw!

DAW (*Within*) What say you, sir?

TRUEWIT Whip out behind me suddenly; and no anger i' your looks to your adversary. Now, now! 100

LA FOOLE *and* DAW *come out of their studies and salute each other*

LA FOOLE Noble Sir John Daw! Where ha' you been?

DAW To seek you, Sir Amorous.

LA FOOLE Me! I honour you.

DAW I prevent you, sir.

CLERIMONT They have forgot their rapiers!

TRUEWIT Oh, they meet in peace, man.

DAUPHINE Where's your sword, Sir John?

CLERIMONT And yours, Sir Amorous?

DAW Mine? My boy had it forth to mend the handle, e'en now. 110

LA FOOLE And my gold handle was broke too, and my boy had it forth.

DAUPHINE Indeed, sir? How their excuses meet!

CLERIMONT What a consent there is, i' the handles!

TRUEWIT Nay, there is so i' the points too, I warrant you.

MISTRESS OTTER Oh me! Madam, he comes again, the madman; away!

*Exeunt* LADIES, DAW *and* LA FOOLE

## Act IV, scene vii

*Enter* MOROSE: *he had found the two swords drawn within*

MOROSE What make these naked weapons here, gentlemen?

TRUEWIT Oh, sir! Here hath like to been murder since you went! A couple of knights fallen out about the

88 erection: 'high spirits. The sexual pun is appropriate after the ritual castration' (Beaurline)

104 prevent: anticipate

109 handle: with pun on 'handle' meaning 'excuse'

115 points: a) sword-points, which both have been afraid to use; b) various points of their excuses (Holdsworth)

bride's favours: we were fain to take away their weapons; your house had been begged by this time else—

MOROSE For what?

CLERIMONT For manslaughter, sir, as being accessory.

MOROSE And for her favours? 10

TRUEWIT Ay, sir, heretofore, not present. Clerimont, carry 'em their swords now. They have done all the hurt they will do. *Exit CLERIMONT with the swords*

DAUPHINE Ha' you spoke with a lawyer, sir?

MOROSE Oh no! There is such a noise i' the court, that they have frighted me home with more violence than I went! Such speaking, and counter-speaking, with their several voices of citations, appellations, allegations, certificates, attachments, intergatories, references, convictions, and afflictions indeed, among the doctors and proctors, that the noise here is silence to't! A kind of calm midnight! 22

TRUEWIT Why, sir, if you would be resolved indeed, I can bring you hither a very sufficient lawyer and a learned divine, that shall enquire into every least scruple for you.

MOROSE Can you, Master Truewit?

TRUEWIT Yes, and are very sober grave persons, that will dispatch it in a chamber, with a whisper or two.

MOROSE Good sir, shall I hope this benefit from you, and trust myself into your hands? 31

TRUEWIT Alas, sir! Your nephew and I have been ashamed, and oft-times mad, since you went, to think how you are abused. Go in, good sir, and lock yourself up till we call you; we'll tell you more anon, sir.

MOROSE Do your pleasure with me, gentlemen; I believe in you, and that deserves no delusion— *Exit*

TRUEWIT You shall find none, sir—but heaped, heaped plenty of vexation. 40

DAUPHINE What wilt thou do now, Wit?

TRUEWIT Recover me hither Otter, and the barber, if you can by any means, presently.

DAUPHINE Why? To what purpose?

TRUEWIT Oh, I'll make the deepest divine, and gravest lawyer, out o' them two for him—

DAUPHINE Thou canst not, man, these are waking dreams. 48

TRUEWIT Do not fear me. Clap but a civil gown with a

welt o' the one, and a canonical cloak with sleeves o' the other, and give 'em a few terms i' their mouths; if there come not forth as able a doctor and complete a parson for this turn as may be wished, trust not my election. And, I hope, without wronging the dignity of either profession, since they are but persons put on, and for mirth's sake, to torment him. The barber smatters Latin, I remember. 57

DAUPHINE Yes, and Otter too.

TRUEWIT Well then, if I make 'em not wrangle out this case, to his no comfort, let me be thought a Jack Daw, or La Foole, or anything worse. Go you to your ladies, but first send for them. 62

DAUPHINE I will.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene i

*Enter LA FOOLE, CLERIMONT, DAW*

LA FOOLE Where had you our swords, Master Clerimont?

CLERIMONT Why, Dauphine took 'em from the madman.

LA FOOLE And he took 'em from our boys, I warrant you?

CLERIMONT Very like, sir.

LA FOOLE Thank you, good Master Clerimont. Sir John Daw and I are both beholden to you.

CLERIMONT Would I knew how to make you so, gentlemen. 11

DAW Sir Amorous and I are your servants, sir.

*Enter MAVIS*

MAVIS Gentlemen, have any of you a pen and ink? I would fain write out a riddle in Italian, for Sir Dauphine to translate.

CLERIMONT Not I, in troth, lady, I am no scrivener.

DAW I can furnish you, I think, lady.

*Exeunt DAW and MAVIS*

CLERIMONT He has it in the haft of a knife, I believe!

LA FOOLE No, he has his box of instruments.

CLERIMONT Like a surgeon! 20

LA FOOLE For the mathematics: his squire, his compasses, his brass pens, and black lead, to draw maps of every place and person where he comes.

5 fain: obliged

6 begged: begged for in anticipation of the confiscation of Morose's property as that of a criminal (eds)

15–22 derived from Libanius, *Declamation XXVI*, sections 3–6

19 attachments: writs of arrest  
intergatories: interrogatories

21 doctors . . . proctors: barristers . . . attorneys

26 scruple: uncertainty

49 fear: doubt

50 welt: border (here, of fur)

54 election: judgement, ability to make choices

54–6 without . . . him: Jonson had offended the legal profession with some of his earlier writings; Truewit's disclaimer is thus a precaution against further trouble

16 scrivener: professional scribe

18 haft: handle

21 squire: square

CLERIMONT How, maps of persons!  
 LA FOOLE Yes, sir, of Nomentack, when he was here,  
 and of the Prince of Moldavia, and of his mistress,  
 Mistress Epicoene.  
 CLERIMONT Away! He has not found out her latitude, I  
 hope.  
 LA FOOLE You are a pleasant gentleman, sir. 30  
*Enter DAW*  
 CLERIMONT Faith, now we are in private, let's wanton  
 it a little, and talk waggishly. Sir John, I am telling  
 Sir Amorous here that you two govern the ladies;  
 where'er you come, you carry the feminine gender  
 afore you.  
 DAW They shall rather carry us afore them, if they will,  
 sir.  
 CLERIMONT Nay, I believe that they do, withal; but  
 that you are the prime men in their affections, and  
 direct all their actions— 40  
 DAW Not I; Sir Amorous is.  
 LA FOOLE I protest, Sir John is.  
 DAW As I hope to rise i' the state, Sir Amorous, you ha'  
 the person.  
 LA FOOLE Sir John, you ha' the person, and the  
 discourse too.  
 DAW Not I, sir. I have no discourse—and then you  
 have activity beside.  
 LA FOOLE I protest, Sir John, you come as high from  
 Tripoli as I do every whit, and lift as many joined  
 stools and leap over 'em, if you would use it— 51  
 CLERIMONT Well, agree on't together, knights; for  
 between you, you divide the kingdom, or  
 commonwealth of ladies' affections: I see it, and can  
 perceive a little how they observe you, and fear you,  
 indeed. You could tell strange stories, my masters, if  
 you would, I know.  
 DAW Faith, we have seen somewhat, sir.

25 Nomentack: native American from Virginia, brought to  
 England in 1608 as a hostage, and sent back in 1609; he  
 was murdered in Bermuda on the return voyage  
 26 Prince of Moldavia . . . his mistress: see Dedicatory  
 Epistle, l. 16n. Lady Arbella Stuart, James VI/T's cousin,  
 took this to be a reference to her supposed engagement  
 to Stephen Janiculo, the (bogus) Prince of Moldavia. As  
 a result of her objection, the play was closed in February  
 1610. La Foole is, of course, referring to Daw's mistress,  
 'Mistress Epicoene', but his confused syntax results,  
 deliberately or otherwise, in this ambiguity  
 28 latitude: locality; with pun on 'laxity of conduct'  
 30 pleasant: witty, humorous  
 34-5 you . . . afore you: a jibe at their own effeminacy  
 44 person: attractiveness  
 49-50 come . . . Tripoli: vault and tumble  
 50 use: practise  
 54 commonwealth: 'implying that Daw and La Foole's  
 women are shared by everyone' (Holdsworth)

LA FOOLE That we have—velvet petticoats, and  
 wrought smocks, or so. 60  
 DAW Ay, and—  
 CLERIMONT Nay, out with it, Sir John; do not envy  
 your friend the pleasure of hearing, when you have  
 had the delight of tasting.  
 DAW Why—a—do you speak, Sir Amorous.  
 LA FOOLE No, do you, Sir John Daw.  
 DAW I' faith, you shall.  
 LA FOOLE I' faith, you shall.  
 DAW Why, we have been—  
 LA FOOLE In the Great Bed at Ware together in our  
 time. On, Sir John. 71  
 DAW Nay, do you, Sir Amorous.  
 CLERIMONT And these ladies with you, knights?  
 LA FOOLE No, excuse us, sir.  
 DAW We must not wound reputation.  
 LA FOOLE No matter—they were these, or others. Our  
 bath cost us fifteen pound, when we came home.  
 CLERIMONT Do you hear, Sir John, you shall tell me  
 but one thing truly, as you love me.  
 DAW If I can, I will, sir. 80  
 CLERIMONT You lay in the same house with the bride  
 here?  
 DAW Yes, and conversed with her hourly, sir.  
 CLERIMONT And what humour is she of? Is she  
 coming, and open, free?  
 DAW Oh, exceeding open, sir. I was her servant, and  
 Sir Amorous was to be.  
 CLERIMONT Come, you have both had favours from  
 her? I know and have heard so much.  
 DAW Oh no, sir. 90  
 LA FOOLE You shall excuse us, sir: we must not wound  
 reputation.  
 CLERIMONT Tut, she is married now, and you cannot  
 hurt her with any report, and therefore speak plainly:  
 how many times, i' faith? Which of you led first? Ha?  
 LA FOOLE Sir John had her maidenhead, indeed.  
 DAW Oh, it pleases him to say so, sir, but Sir Amorous  
 knows what's what as well.  
 CLERIMONT Dost thou i' faith, Amorous?  
 LA FOOLE In a manner, sir. 100  
 CLERIMONT Why, I commend you, lads. Little knows  
 Don Bridegroom of this. Nor shall he, for me.

59-60 velvet . . . smocks: worn by courtly ladies and high-  
 class prostitutes  
 70 Great Bed at Ware: famous bed, eleven feet square and  
 capable of sleeping twelve people, originally at the  
 Saracen's Head in Ware, now in the Victoria and Albert  
 Museum, London  
 77 bath: probably medicinal, to treat venereal disease  
 84 humour: temperament, disposition  
 85 coming . . . free: eager, compliant (with sexual  
 connotations)



DAW Hang him, mad ox.

CLERIMONT Speak softly: here comes his nephew, with the Lady Haughty. He'll get the ladies from you, sirs, if you look not to him in time.

LA FOOLE Why, if he do, we'll fetch 'em home again, I warrant you.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene ii

*Enter* HAUGHTY, DAUPHINE

HAUGHTY I assure you, Sir Dauphine, it is the price and estimation of your virtue only that hath embarked me to this adventure, and I could not but make out to tell you so; nor can I repent me of the act, since it is always an argument of some virtue in ourselves, that we love and affect it so in others.

DAUPHINE Your ladyship sets too high a price on my weakness.

HAUGHTY Sir, I can distinguish gems from pebbles—

DAUPHINE (*Aside*) Are you so skilful in stones? 10

HAUGHTY And howsoever I may suffer in such a judgement as yours, by admitting equality of rank, or society, with Centaure, or Mavis—

DAUPHINE You do not, madam; I perceive they are your mere foils.

HAUGHTY Then are you a friend to truth, sir. It makes me love you the more. It is not the outward, but the inward man that I affect. They are not apprehensive of an eminent perfection, but love flat and dully. 19

CENTAURE (*Within*) Where are you, my Lady Haughty?

HAUGHTY I come presently, Centaure.—My chamber, sir, my page shall show you; and Trusty, my woman, shall be ever awake for you; you need not fear to communicate anything with her, for she is a Fidelia. I pray you wear this jewel for my sake, Sir Dauphine. (*Enter* CENTAURE) Where's Mavis, Centaure?

CENTAURE Within, madam, a-writing. I'll follow you presently. I'll but speak a word with Sir Dauphine.

*Exit* HAUGHTY 29

DAUPHINE With me, madam?

CENTAURE Good Sir Dauphine, do not trust Haughty, nor make any credit to her, whatever you do besides.

Sir Dauphine, I give you this caution, she is a perfect courtier, and loves nobody but for her uses; and for her uses, she loves all. Besides, her physicians give her out to be none o' the clearest; whether she pay 'em or no, heaven knows; and she's above fifty too, and pargets! See her in a forenoon. Here comes Mavis, a worse face than she! You would not like this by candlelight. If you'll come to my chamber one o' these mornings early, or late in an evening, I'll tell you more. (*Enter* MAVIS) Where's Haughty, Mavis?

MAVIS Within, Centaure. 42

CENTAURE What ha' you there?

MAVIS An Italian riddle for Sir Dauphine (you shall not see it i' faith, Centaure). Good Sir Dauphine, solve it for me. I'll call for it anon.

*Exeunt* MAVIS and CENTAURE

*Enter* CLERIMONT

CLERIMONT How now, Dauphine? How dost thou quit thyself of these females?

DAUPHINE 'Slight, they haunt me like fairies, and give me jewels here; I cannot be rid of 'em. 50

CLERIMONT Oh, you must not tell, though.

DAUPHINE Mass, I forgot that; I was never so assaulted. One loves for virtue, and bribes me for this. Another loves me with caution, and so would possess me. A third brings me a riddle here; and all are jealous, and rail each at other.

CLERIMONT A riddle? Pray le'me see't? (*He reads the paper*) 'Sir Dauphine, I chose this way of intimation for privacy. The ladies here, I know, have both hope, and purpose, to make a collegiate and servant of you. If I might be so honoured as to appear at any end of so noble a work, I would enter into a fame of taking physic tomorrow, and continue it four or five days, or longer, for your visitation. Mavis.'—By my faith, a subtle one! Call you this a riddle? What's their plain dealing, trow? 66

DAUPHINE We lack Truewit to tell us that.

CLERIMONT We lack him for somewhat else too: his knights *reformados* are wound up as high, and insolent, as ever they were.

DAUPHINE You jest.

103 ox: fool; also suggests 'cuckold' because of its horns

1 price: worth

4 make out: contrive, manage

6 affect: seek

10 stones: a) gems; b) testicles

15 foils: a) settings for jewels; b) contrasts, which show one off to advantage

19 eminent: distinguished, prominent (with sexual pun)

24 Fidelia: Latin for 'trusty'; also a common name for the heroines of popular romances

31 make . . . to: put any faith in

35 clearest: a) most innocent; b) most free from disease

37 pargets: plasters (herself with make-up)

39 by candlelight: i.e. even by candlelight (the most flattering kind of light)

51 you . . . tell: revelation of a fairy's gift rendered it void and brought bad luck (eds)

54 this: i.e. this jewel  
caution: warnings

62 enter . . . fame: begin a rumour

63 physic: medical treatment (as an excuse for staying in)

69 *reformados*: disbanded soldiers who kept their rank; with pun on 'reformed'

CLERIMONT No drunkards, either with wine or vanity, ever confessed such stories of themselves. I would not give a fly's leg in balance against all the women's reputations here, if they could be but thought to speak truth; and for the bride, they have made their affidavit against her directly—

DAUPHINE What, that they have lien with her?

CLERIMONT Yes, and tell times, and circumstances, with the cause why, and the place where. I had almost brought 'em to affirm that they had done it today.

DAUPHINE Not both of 'em.

CLERIMONT Yes, faith; with a sooth or two more I had effected it. They would ha' set it down under their hands.

DAUPHINE Why, they will be our sport, I see, still! Whether we will or no.

### Act V, scene iii

*Enter TRUEWIT*

TRUEWIT Oh, are you here? Come, Dauphine. Go, call your uncle presently. I have fitted my divine and my canonist, dyed their beards and all; the knaves do not know themselves, they are so exalted and altered. Preferment changes any man. Thou shalt keep one door, and I another, and then Clerimont in the midst, that he may have no means of escape from their cavilling, when they grow hot once. And then the women (as I have given the bride her instructions) to break in upon him, i' the *l'envoy*. Oh, 'twill be full and twanging! Away, fetch him. (*Exit DAUPHINE*) (*Enter CUTBEARD disguised as a canon lawyer, OTTER as a divine*) Come, master doctor, and master parson, look to your parts now, and discharge 'em bravely; you are well set forth, perform it as well. If you chance to be out, do not confess it with standing still, or humming, or gaping one at another; but go on, and talk aloud and eagerly, use vehement action, and only remember your terms, and you are safe. Let the matter go where it will: you have many will do so. But at first, be very solemn and grave like your garments, though you loose yourselves after, and skip out like a brace of jugglers on a table. Here he comes! Set your faces, and look superciliously while I present you.

*Enter DAUPHINE and MOROSE*

78 lien: lain

84 sooth: exclamation (e.g. 'really!', 'indeed!')

5 keep: guard

10 *l'envoy*: conclusion

11 twanging: exceptionally fine (with pun on 'noisy')

16 be out: forget your words

18 action: gestures

MOROSE Are these the two learned men?

TRUEWIT Yes, sir; please you salute 'em?

MOROSE Salute 'em? I had rather do anything than wear out time so unfruitfully, sir. I wonder how these common forms, as 'God save you' and 'You are welcome', are come to be a habit in our lives! Or 'I am glad to see you!' when I cannot see what the profit can be of these words, so long as it is no whit better with him whose affairs are sad and grievous, that he hears this salutation.

TRUEWIT 'Tis true, sir; we'll go to the matter then.

Gentlemen, master doctor and master parson, I have acquainted you sufficiently with the business for which you are come hither. And you are not now to inform yourselves in the state of the question, I know. This is the gentleman who expects your resolution, and therefore, when you please, begin.

OTTER Please you, master doctor.

CUTBEARD Please you, good master parson.

OTTER I would hear the canon law speak first.

CUTBEARD It must give place to positive divinity, sir.

MOROSE Nay, good gentlemen, do not throw me into circumstances. Let your comforts arrive quickly at me, those that are. Be swift in affording me my peace, if so I shall hope any. I love not your disputations, or your court tumults. And that it be not strange to you, I will tell you. My father, in my education, was wont to advise me that I should always collect and contain my mind, not suff'ring it to flow loosely; that I should look to what things were necessary to the carriage of my life, and what not; embracing the one and eschewing the other. In short, that I should endear myself to rest, and avoid turmoil; which now is grown to be another nature to me. So that I come not to your public pleadings, or your places of noise; not that I neglect those things that make for the dignity of the commonwealth, but for the mere avoiding of clamours and impertinencies of orators, that know not how to be silent. And for the cause of noise am I now a suitor to you. You do not know in what a misery I have been exercised this day, what a torrent of evil! My very house turns round with the tumult! I dwell in a windmill! The perpetual motion is here, and not at Eltham.

27–34 derived from Libanius, Declamation XXVI, section 7

38 are not now: do not need now

45 positive: practical (as opposed to theoretical or speculative)

47 circumstances: circumstantialities

51–63 derived from Libanius, Declamation XXVI, section 6

60 neglect: do not care about

62 impertinencies: irrelevances

68 perpetual . . . Eltham: a Dutch scientist, Cornelius Drebbel, demonstrated his perpetual motion machine at Eltham Palace in 1609–10; it was much visited

TRUEWIT Well, good master doctor, will you break the ice? Master parson will wade after.

CUTBEARD Sir, though unworthy, and the weaker, I will presume.

OTTER 'Tis no presumption, *domine* doctor.

MOROSE Yet again!

CUTBEARD Your question is, for how many causes a man may have *divortium legitimum*, a lawful divorce. First, you must understand the nature of the word divorce, *a divertendo*—

MOROSE No excursions upon words, good doctor; to the question briefly. 80

CUTBEARD I answer then, the canon law affords divorce but in few cases, and the principal is in the common case, the adulterous case. But there are *duodecim impedimenta*, twelve impediments (as we call 'em) all which do not *dirimire contractum*, but *irritum reddere matrimonium*, as we say in the canon law, not take away the bond, but cause a nullity therein.

MOROSE I understood you before; good sir, avoid your impertinency of translation.

OTTER He cannot open this too much, sir, by your favour. 91

MOROSE Yet more!

TRUEWIT Oh, you must give the learned men leave, sir. To your impediments, master doctor.

CUTBEARD The first is *impedimentum erroris*.

OTTER Of which there are several species.

CUTBEARD Ay, as *error personae*.

OTTER If you contract yourself to one person, thinking her another.

CUTBEARD Then, *error fortunae*. 100

OTTER If she be a beggar, and you thought her rich.

CUTBEARD Then, *error qualitatis*.

OTTER If she prove stubborn, or headstrong, that you thought obedient.

MOROSE How? Is that, sir, a lawful impediment? One at once, I pray you, gentlemen.

OTTER Ay, *ante copulam*, but not *post copulam*, sir.

CUTBEARD Master parson says right. *Nec post nuptiarum benedictionem*. It doth indeed but *irrita*

*reddere sponsalia*, annul the contract; after marriage it is of no obstancy. 110

TRUEWIT Alas, sir, what a hope are we fall'n from, by this time!

CUTBEARD The next is *conditio*: if you thought her free-born, and she prove a bondwoman, there is impediment of estate and condition.

OTTER Ay, but master doctor, those servitudes are *sublatae* now, among us Christians.

CUTBEARD By your favour, master parson—

OTTER You shall give me leave, master doctor. 120

MOROSE Nay, gentlemen, quarrel not in that question; it concerns not my case: pass to the third.

CUTBEARD Well then, the third is *votum*. If either party have made a vow of chastity. But that practice, as master parson said of the other, is taken away among us, thanks be to discipline. The fourth is *cognatio*: if the persons be of kin, within the degrees.

OTTER Ay: do you know what the degrees are, sir?

MOROSE No, nor I care not, sir: they offer me no comfort in the question, I am sure. 131

CUTBEARD But there is a branch of this impediment may, which is *cognatio spiritualis*. If you were her godfather, sir, then the marriage is incestuous.

OTTER That comment is absurd, and superstitious, master doctor. I cannot endure it. Are we not all brothers and sisters, and as much akin in that, as godfathers, and goddaughters?

MOROSE Oh me! To end the controversy, I never was a godfather, I never was a godfather in my life, sir. Pass to the next. 141

CUTBEARD The fifth is *crimen adulterii*: the known case. The sixth *cultus disparitas*, difference of religion: have you ever examined her what religion she is of?

MOROSE No, I would rather she were of none, than be put to the trouble of it!

OTTER You may have it done for you, sir.

MOROSE By no means, good sir; on, to the rest. Shall you ever come to an end, think you?

TRUEWIT Yes, he has done half, sir. (On, to the rest.) Be patient and expect, sir. 151

73 *domine*: master

78 *a divertendo*: derived from 'separating'

84 twelve impediments: the twelve impediments are taken from St Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*

90 open: expound

95 *impedimentum erroris*: impediment arising from error

97 *error personae*: mistaken identity

100 *error fortunae*: error as to fortune

102 *error qualitatis*: mistake as to disposition

105–6 One at once: one at a time

107 *ante copulam* . . . *post copulam*: before the union . . . after the union

108–9 *Nec* . . . *benedictionem*: not after the sacrament of marriage

110 contract: betrothal

111 obstancy: judicial opposition

113 time: i.e. timing (Holdsworth)

114 *conditio*: social rank

118 *sublatae*: abolished

123 *votum*: vow

126 discipline: the church system (under Protestantism)

127 *cognatio*: (blood) relationship

128 degrees: i.e. of kinship within which marriage is forbidden

142 *crimen adulterii*: the crime of adultery

143 case: a) instance; b) vagina (a common pun) (Holdsworth)

CUTBEARD The seventh is *vis*: if it were upon compulsion, or force.  
 MOROSE Oh no, it was too voluntary, mine; too voluntary.  
 CUTBEARD The eighth is *ordo*: if ever she have taken holy orders.  
 OTTER That's superstitious too.  
 MOROSE No matter, master parson: would she would go into a nunnery yet. **160**  
 CUTBEARD The ninth is *ligamen*: if you were bound, sir, to any other before.  
 MOROSE I thrust myself too soon into these fetters.  
 CUTBEARD The tenth is *publica honestas*, which is *inchoata quaedam affinitas*.  
 OTTER Ay, or *affinitas orta ex sponsalibus*, and is but *leve impedimentum*.  
 MOROSE I feel no air of comfort blowing to me, in all this.  
 CUTBEARD The eleventh is *affinitas ex fornicatione*. **170**  
 OTTER Which is no less *vera affinitas* than the other, master doctor.  
 CUTBEARD True, *quae oritur ex legitimo matrimonio*.  
 OTTER You say right, venerable doctor. And *nascitur ex eo, quod per conjugium duae personae efficiuntur una caro*—  
 MOROSE Heyday, now they begin!  
 CUTBEARD I conceive you, master parson. *Ita per fornicationem aequae est verus pater, qui sic generat*—  
 OTTER *Et vere filius qui sic generatur*— **180**  
 MOROSE What's all this to me?  
 CLERIMONT (*Aside*) Now it grows warm.  
 CUTBEARD The twelfth and last is *si forte coire nequibus*.  
 OTTER Ay, that is *impedimentum gravissimum*. It doth utterly annul and annihilate, that. If you have *manifestam frigiditatem*, you are well, sir.  
 TRUEWIT Why, there is comfort come at length, sir.

161 *ligamen*: bond  
 164 *publica honestas*: public reputation  
 165 *inchoata . . . affinitas*: (previous) unconsummated marriage  
 166 *affinitas . . . sponsalibus*: relationship arising from a betrothal  
*leve*: slight  
 170 *affinitas ex fornicatione*: relationship arising from fornication  
 171 *vera affinitas*: true relationship  
 173 *quae . . . matrimonio*: (than that) which comes from legal marriage  
 174–6 *nascitur . . . caro*: it follows from this, that through physical union two people are made one flesh  
 178–9 *Ita . . . generat*: thus he is equally a true father who begets through fornication  
 180 *Et . . . generatur*: and he truly a son who is thus begotten  
 183 *si . . . nequibus*: if by chance you are unable to copulate  
 184 *gravissimum*: very weighty  
 186 *manifestam frigiditatem*: evident frigidity

Confess yourself but a man unable, and she will sue to be divorced first.  
 OTTER Ay, or if there be *morbus perpetuus et insanabilis*, as paralysis, elephantiasis, or so— **191**  
 DAUPHINE Oh, but *frigiditas* is the fairer way, gentlemen.  
 OTTER You say troth, sir, and as it is in the canon, master doctor.  
 CUTBEARD I conceive you, sir.  
 CLERIMONT (*Aside*) Before he speaks.  
 OTTER That 'a boy or child under years is not fit for marriage because he cannot *reddere debitum*'. So your *omnipotentes*—  
 TRUEWIT (*Aside to OTTER*) Your *impotentes*, you whoreson lobster. **201**  
 OTTER Your *impotentes*, I should say, are *minime apti ad contrahenda matrimonium*.  
 TRUEWIT (*Aside to OTTER*) *Matrimonium*? We shall have most unmatrimonial Latin with you: *matrimonia*, and be hanged.  
 DAUPHINE (*Aside to TRUEWIT*) You put 'em out, man.  
 CUTBEARD But then there will arise a doubt, master parson, in our case, *post matrimonium*: that *frigiditate praeditus*—do you conceive me, sir? **210**  
 OTTER Very well, sir.  
 CUTBEARD Who cannot *uti uxore pro uxore*, may *habere eam pro sorore*.  
 OTTER Absurd, absurd, absurd, and merely apostatical.  
 CUTBEARD You shall pardon me, master parson, I can prove it.  
 OTTER You can prove a will, master doctor, you can prove nothing else. Does not the verse of your own canon say, *Haec socianda vetant conubia, facta retractant*— **221**  
 CUTBEARD I grant you, but how do they *retractare*, master parson?  
 MOROSE (Oh, this was it I feared.)  
 OTTER *In aeternum*, sir.

190 *morbus . . . insanabilis*: a chronic and incurable disease  
 198 *reddere debitum*: render his obligation  
 199 *omnipotentes*: omnipotent men  
 200 *impotentes*: impotent men  
 202–3 *minime . . . matrimonium*: least suited to contracting marriages  
 205 unmatrimonial Latin: because Otter's errors disrupt the grammatical agreement or 'marriage' of words  
 207 put 'em out: make them forget their words  
 209 *post matrimonium*: after marriage  
 209–10 *frigiditate praeditus*: one who is frigid  
 212–13 *uti . . . sorore*: use a wife as a wife, may keep her as a sister  
 214–15 merely apostatical: absolutely heretical  
 220–1 *Haec . . . retractant*: these things forbid uniting in marriage, and after marriages have been made to annul them  
 225 *In aeternum*: forever

CUTBEARD That's false in divinity, by your favour.  
 OTTER 'Tis false in humanity to say so. Is he not *prorsus inutilis ad thorum*? Can he *praestare fidem datam*? I would fain know.  
 CUTBEARD Yes: how if he do *convalescere*? 230  
 OTTER He cannot *convalescere*, it is impossible.  
 TRUEWIT (*To MOROSE*) Nay, good sir, attend the learned men, they'll think you neglect 'em else.  
 CUTBEARD Or if he do *simulare* himself *frigidum, odio uxoris*, or so?  
 OTTER I say he is *adulter manifestus* then.  
 DAUPHINE (They dispute it very learnedly, i' faith.)  
 OTTER And *prostitutor uxoris*, and this is positive.  
 MOROSE Good sir, let me escape.  
 TRUEWIT You will not do me that wrong, sir? 240  
 OTTER And therefore, if he be *manifeste frigidus*, sir—  
 CUTBEARD Ay, if he be *manifeste frigidus*, I grant you—  
 OTTER Why, that was my conclusion.  
 CUTBEARD And mine too.  
 TRUEWIT Nay, hear the conclusion, sir.  
 OTTER Then *frigiditatis causa*—  
 CUTBEARD Yes, *causa frigiditatis*—  
 MOROSE Oh, mine ears!  
 OTTER She may have *libellum divortii* against you.  
 CUTBEARD Ay, *divortii libellum* she will sure have. 250  
 MOROSE Good echoes, forbear.  
 OTTER If you confess it.  
 CUTBEARD Which I would do, sir—  
 MOROSE I will do anything—  
 OTTER And clear myself *in foro conscientiae*—  
 CUTBEARD Because you want indeed—  
 MOROSE Yet more?  
 OTTER *Exercendi potestate*.

## Act V, scene iv

*Enter* EPICOENE, HAUGHTY, CENTAURE, MAVIS, MISTRESS OTTER, DAW, LA FOOLE

227 humanity: secular learning  
 227–8 *prorsus* . . . *thorum*: utterly useless in bed. 'Otter's mistake of *thorum* for *torum* (Latin *torus* = bed) gives a pun on *thoros* (Greek *θορος* = semen)' (Procter)  
 228 *praestare* . . . *datam*: fulfil the promise given  
 231 *convalescere*: recover  
 234–5 *simulare* . . . *uxoris*: pretend to be frigid, out of hatred for his wife  
 236 *adulter manifestus*: a manifest adulterer  
 238 *prostitutor uxoris*: the prostitutor of his wife  
 241 *manifeste*: manifestly  
 246 *frigiditatis causa*: on the ground of frigidity  
 249 *libellum divortii*: a petition for divorce  
 255 *in foro conscientiae*: at the bar of conscience (a legal proverb)  
 256 want: lack  
 258 *Exercendi potestate*: the power of putting to use (i.e. of consummation)

EPICOENE I will not endure it any longer. Ladies, I beseech you help me. This is such a wrong as never was offered to poor bride before. Upon her marriage-day, to have her husband conspire against her, and a couple of mercenary companions to be brought in for form's sake, to persuade a separation! If you had blood or virtue in you, gentlemen, you would not suffer such earwigs about a husband, or scorpions to creep between man and wife—  
 MOROSE Oh the variety and changes of my torment! 10  
 HAUGHTY Let 'em be cudgelled out of doors by our grooms.  
 CENTAURE I'll lend you my footman.  
 MAVIS We'll have our men blanket 'em i' the hall.  
 MISTRESS OTTER As there was one at our house, madam, for peeping in at the door.  
 DAW Content, i' faith.  
 TRUEWIT Stay, ladies and gentlemen, you'll hear before you proceed?  
 MAVIS I'd ha' the bridegroom blanketed too. 20  
 CENTAURE Begin with him first.  
 HAUGHTY Yes, by my troth.  
 MOROSE Oh mankind generation!  
 DAUPHINE Ladies, for my sake forbear.  
 HAUGHTY Yes, for Sir Dauphine's sake.  
 CENTAURE He shall command us.  
 LA FOOLE He is as fine a gentleman of his inches, madam, as any is about the town, and wears as good colours when he list. 29  
 TRUEWIT (*Aside to MOROSE*) Be brief, sir, and confess your infirmity, she'll be afire to be quit of you; if she but hear that named once, you shall not entreat her to stay. She'll fly you like one that had the marks upon him.  
 MOROSE Ladies, I must crave all your pardons—  
 TRUEWIT Silence, ladies.  
 MOROSE For a wrong I have done to your whole sex, in marrying this fair and virtuous gentlewoman—  
 CLERIMONT Hear him, good ladies. 39  
 MOROSE Being guilty of an infirmity which, before I conferred with these learned men, I thought I might have concealed—  
 TRUEWIT But now being better informed in his conscience by them, he is to declare it, and give satisfaction, by asking your public forgiveness.  
 5 companions: fellows (contemptuous)  
 8 earwigs: ear whisperers, parasites  
 14 blanket: toss in a blanket  
 23 mankind: masculine, virago-like; also furious, savage (related to 'mankeen'; used of animals inclined to attack people)  
 27 of his inches: brave (with sexual pun)  
 29 colours: a knight's heraldic colours  
 list: wishes  
 33 marks: of the plague

MOROSE I am no man, ladies.  
 ALL How!  
 MOROSE Utterly unable in nature, by reason of  
 frigidity, to perform the duties, or any the least office  
 of a husband. 50  
 MAVIS Now, out upon him, prodigious creature!  
 CENTAURE Bridegroom uncarneate.  
 HAUGHTY And would you offer it, to a young  
 gentlewoman?  
 MISTRESS OTTER A lady of her longings?  
 EPICOENE Tut, a device, a device, this, it smells rankly,  
 ladies. A mere comment of his own.  
 TRUEWIT Why, if you suspect that, ladies, you may  
 have him searched.  
 DAW As the custom is, by a jury of physicians. 60  
 LA FOOLE Yes, faith, 'twill be brave.  
 MOROSE Oh me, must I undergo that!  
 MISTRESS OTTER No, let women search him, madam:  
 we can do it ourselves.  
 MOROSE Out on me, worse!  
 EPICOENE No, ladies, you shall not need, I'll take him  
 with all his faults.  
 MOROSE Worst of all!  
 CLERIMONT Why, then 'tis no divorce, doctor, if she  
 consent not? 70  
 CUTBEARD No, if the man be *frigidus*, it is *de parte*  
*uxoris* that we grant *libellum divortii*, in the law.  
 OTTER Ay, it is the same in theology.  
 MOROSE Worse, worse than worst!  
 TRUEWIT Nay, sir, be not utterly disheartened, we have  
 yet a small relic of hope left, as near as our comfort is  
 blown out. Clerimont, produce your brace of knights.  
 What was that, master parson, you told me *in errore*  
*qualitatis*, e'en now? (*Aside to DAUPHINE*) Dauphine,  
 whisper the bride that she carry it as if she were  
 guilty and ashamed. 81  
 OTTER Marry, sir, *in errore qualitatis* (which master  
 doctor did forbear to urge) if she be found *corrupta*,  
 that is, vitiated or broken up, that was *pro virgine*  
*desponsa*, espoused for a maid—  
 MOROSE What then, sir?  
 OTTER It doth *dirimere contractum* and *irritum reddere*  
 too.

51 prodigious: monstrous  
 52 uncarneate: not of flesh and blood (Centaur's coinage,  
 from 'incarnate')  
 53 offer it: attempt to do such a thing  
 55 longings: a) wealth, belongings; b) sexual longings  
 57 comment: invention  
 59 searched: examined  
 71-2 *de . . . uxoris*: on the wife's behalf  
 80 carry it: behave  
 84 vitiated: deflowered  
 86 *dirimere . . . reddere*: cancel the contract and render it null  
 and void

TRUEWIT If this be true, we are happy again, sir, once  
 more. Here are an honourable brace of knights that  
 shall affirm so much. 91  
 DAW Pardon us, good Master Clerimont.  
 LA FOOLE You shall excuse us, Master Clerimont.  
 CLERIMONT Nay, you must make it good now, knights,  
 there is no remedy; I'll eat no words for you, nor no  
 men: you know you spoke it to me?  
 DAW Is this gentleman-like, sir?  
 TRUEWIT (*Aside to DAW*) Jack Daw, he's worse than Sir  
 Amorous: fiercer a great deal. (*Aside to LA FOOLE*) Sir  
 Amorous, beware, there be ten Daws in this  
 Clerimont. 101  
 LA FOOLE I'll confess it, sir.  
 DAW Will you, Sir Amorous? Will you wound  
 reputation?  
 LA FOOLE I am resolved.  
 TRUEWIT So should you be too, Jack Daw: what should  
 keep you off? She is but a woman, and in disgrace.  
 He'll be glad on't.  
 DAW Will he? I thought he would ha' been angry.  
 CLERIMONT You will dispatch, knights; it must be  
 done, i' faith. 111  
 TRUEWIT Why, an' it must, it shall, sir, they say.  
 They'll ne'er go back. (*Aside to DAW and LA FOOLE*)  
 Do not tempt his patience.  
 DAW It is true indeed, sir.  
 LA FOOLE Yes, I assure you, sir.  
 MOROSE What is true, gentlemen? What do you assure  
 me?  
 DAW That we have known your bride, sir—  
 LA FOOLE In good fashion. She was our mistress, or so—  
 CLERIMONT Nay, you must be plain, knights, as you  
 were to me. 122  
 OTTER Ay, the question is, if you have *carnaliter* or no.  
 LA FOOLE *Carnaliter*? What else, sir?  
 OTTER It is enough: a plain nullity.  
 EPICOENE I am undone, I am undone!  
 MOROSE Oh, let me worship and adore you, gentlemen!  
 EPICOENE I am undone!  
 MOROSE Yes, to my hand, I thank these knights;  
 master parson, let me thank you otherwise. 130  
*Gives OTTER money*  
 CENTAURE And ha' they confessed?  
 MAVIS Now out upon 'em, informers!  
 TRUEWIT You see what creatures you may bestow your  
 favours on, madams.  
 HAUGHTY I would except against 'em as beaten  
 knights, wench, and not good witnesses in law.

123 *carnaliter*: carnally  
 129 to my hand: see IV.v.18-19n  
 135 except against: object to  
 135-6 beaten knights: cowardly, and therefore not admissible  
 as witnesses or jurymen

MISTRESS OTTER Poor gentlewoman, how she takes it!  
HAUGHTY Be comforted, Morose, I love you the better  
for't.

CENTAURE So do I, I protest. 140

CUTBEARD But, gentlemen, you have not known her  
since *matrimonium*?

DAW Not today, master doctor.

LA FOOLE No, sir, not today.

CUTBEARD Why, then I say, for any act before, the  
*matrimonium* is good and perfect, unless the  
worshipful bridegroom did precisely, before witness,  
demand if she were *virgo ante nuptias*.

EPICOENE No, that he did not, I assure you, master  
doctor. 150

CUTBEARD If he cannot prove that, it is *ratum*  
*conjugium*, notwithstanding the premises. And they  
do no way *impedire*. And this is my sentence, this I  
pronounce.

OTTER I am of master doctor's resolution too, sir; if  
you made not that demand, *ante nuptias*.

MOROSE Oh my heart! Wilt thou break? Wilt thou  
break? This is worst of all worst worsts, that hell  
could have devised! Marry a whore! And so much  
noise! 160

DAUPHINE Come, I see now plain confederacy in this  
doctor and this parson, to abuse a gentleman. You  
study his affliction. I pray be gone, companions. And  
gentlemen, I begin to suspect you for having parts  
with 'em. Sir, will it please you hear me?

MOROSE Oh, do not talk to me, take not from me the  
pleasure of dying in silence, nephew.

DAUPHINE Sir, I must speak to you. I have been long  
your poor despised kinsman, and many a hard  
thought has strengthened you against me; but now it  
shall appear if either I love you or your peace, and  
prefer them to all the world beside. I will not be long  
or grievous to you, sir. If I free you of this unhappy  
match absolutely and instantly after all this trouble,  
and almost in your despair, now— 175

MOROSE (It cannot be.)

DAUPHINE Sir, that you be never troubled with a  
murmur of it more, what shall I hope for, or deserve  
of you?

MOROSE Oh, what thou wilt, nephew! Thou shalt  
deserve me and have me. 180

DAUPHINE Shall I have your favour perfect to me, and  
love hereafter?

MOROSE That and anything beside. Make thine own

147 precisely: expressly

148 *virgo . . . nuptias*: a virgin before marriage

151–2 *ratum conjugium*: a valid marriage

152 premises: previous events

161 confederacy: conspiracy

163 study: seek, aim at

182 perfect to me: entirely for myself

conditions. My whole estate is thine. Manage it, I  
will become thy ward.

DAUPHINE Nay, sir, I will not be so unreasonable.

EPICOENE Will Sir Dauphine be mine enemy too?

DAUPHINE You know I have been long a suitor to you,  
uncle, that out of your estate, which is fifteen hundred  
a year, you would allow me but five hundred during  
life, and assure the rest upon me after: to which I have  
often by myself and friends tendered you a writing to  
sign, which you would never consent, or incline to. If  
you please but to effect it now— 195

MOROSE Thou shalt have it, nephew. I will do it, and  
more.

DAUPHINE If I quit you not presently and forever of  
this cumber, you shall have power instantly, afore all  
these, to revoke your act, and I will become whose  
slave you will give me to, forever. 201

MOROSE Where is the writing? I will seal to it, that, or  
to a blank, and write thine own conditions.

EPICOENE Oh me, most unfortunate wretched  
gentlewoman!

HAUGHTY Will Sir Dauphine do this?

EPICOENE Good sir, have some compassion on me.

MOROSE Oh, my nephew knows you belike; away,  
crocodile! 209

CENTAURE He does it not, sure, without good ground.

DAUPHINE Here, sir. *Gives him papers*

MOROSE Come, nephew; give me the pen. I will  
subscribe to anything, and seal to what thou wilt, for  
my deliverance. Thou art my restorer. Here, I deliver  
it thee as my deed. If there be a word in it lacking, or  
writ with false orthography, I protest before—I will  
not take the advantage. *Returns papers*

DAUPHINE Then here is your release, sir: (*he takes off*  
*EPICOENE's peruke*) you have married a boy: a  
gentleman's son that I have brought up this half year,  
at my great charges, and for this composition which I  
have now made with you. What say you, master  
doctor? This is *justum impedimentum*, I hope, *error*  
*personae*? 224

199 cumber: encumbrance

208 belike: very likely

209 crocodile: believed to weep as it took its prey; hence, one  
who weeps false tears

216 protest before: most eds take the dash to indicate an  
omitted oath ('God', or 'heaven'); however, Holdsworth  
argues (persuasively) that there are many instances of  
oaths in the text, and that the phrase is complete as it  
stands, and means 'declare in advance'

219 you have married a boy: the source for this trick of  
disguising a boy as a bride is principally Pietro Aretino's  
*Il Marescalco* (1533), but also Machiavelli's *Clizia* (1525)  
and Plautus' *Casina*

221 composition: settlement

223 *justum impedimentum*: just impediment

OTTER Yes, sir, *in primo gradu*.

CUTBEARD *In primo gradu*.

DAUPHINE I thank you, good Doctor Cutbeard, and Parson Otter. (*He pulls off their beards and disguise*) You are beholden to 'em, sir, that have taken this pains for you; and my friend, Master Truewit, who enabled 'em for the business. Now you may go in and rest, be as private as you will, sir. I'll not trouble you, till you trouble me with your funeral, which I care not how soon it come. (*Exit MOROSE*) Cutbeard, I'll make your lease good. Thank me not, but with your leg, Cutbeard. And Tom Otter, your princess shall be reconciled to you. How now, gentlemen! Do you look at me? 238

CLERIMONT A boy.

DAUPHINE Yes, Mistress Epicoene.

TRUEWIT Well, Dauphine, you have lurched your friends of the better half of the garland, by concealing this part of the plot! But much good do it thee, thou deserv'st it, lad. And Clerimont, for thy unexpected bringing in these two to confession, wear my part of it freely. Nay, Sir Daw and Sir La Foole, you see the gentlewoman that has done you the favours! We are all thankful to you, and so should the womankind here, specially for lying on her, though not with her! You meant so, I am sure? But that we have stuck it upon you today, in your own imagined persons, and so lately, this Amazon, the champion of the sex, should beat you now thriftily for the common slanders which ladies receive from such cuckoos as you are. You are they that, when no merit or fortune can make you hope to enjoy their bodies, will yet lie with their reputations, and make their fame suffer. Away, you common moths of these and all ladies' honours. Go, travail to make legs and faces, and come home with some new matter to be laughed at: you deserve to live in an air as corrupted as that wherewith you feed rumour. (*Exeunt DAW and LA FOOLE*) Madams, you are mute upon this new metamorphosis! But here stands she that has vindicated your fames. Take heed of such *insectae* hereafter. And let it not trouble you that you have

discovered any mysteries to this young gentleman. He is (a'most) of years, and will make a good visitant within this twelvemonth. In the meantime we'll all undertake for his secrecy, that can speak so well of his silence. (*Coming forward*) Spectators, if you like this comedy, rise cheerfully, and now Morose is gone in, clap your hands. It may be that noise will cure him, at least please him. 274

*Exeunt*

THE END

EPICOENE

This comedy was first  
acted in the year  
1609

By the Children of her Majesty's  
Revels

The principal comedians were

Nathan Field	William Barksted
Giles Carey	William Penn
Hugh Attawell	Richard Allin
John Smith	John Blaney

With the allowance of the Master of Revels

225 *in . . . gradu*: in the first degree

235 make . . . good: see Morose's promise, II.v.93-4

241 lurched: cheated

242 garland: wreath, given to mark a triumph; hence, 'glory'.  
Possibly an allusion to *Coriolanus*, II.ii.97

249 on: about

251-2 stuck it upon: cheated

252 this Amazon: Mistress Otter

253 thriftily: soundly

259 travail: travel and labour

make legs and faces: bow and smirk

265 *insectae*: insects; the incorrect feminine form (in place of the correct neuter) highlights the knights' effeminacy

267 discovered: revealed

268 of years: adult

273 noise: i.e. of clapping

Master of Revels: who licensed plays for performance; at this time, Sir George Buc



# The Roaring Girl

## OR *Moll Cut-Purse.*

As it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortune-stage by  
*the Prince his Players.*

Written by *T. Middleton* and *T. Dekkar.*

My case is alter'd, I must worke for my living.



Printed at London for *Thomas Archer*, and are to be sold at his  
shop in Popes head-pallace, neere the Royall  
Exchange. 1611.

Title page woodcut of the first edition of *The Roaring Girl* (1611) reproduced with permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. Shelfmark Mal 246 (1)

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# Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*

First performed 1611

First published 1611

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'My case is alter'd, I must worke for my living': so runs the punningly ambiguous caption to the woodcut of Moll Cutpurse on the title page of the first edition of *The Roaring Girl*. 'Case' meant 'clothing' (and in the print Moll is, characteristically, cross-dressed), but it was also slang for 'vagina', the fantasised alteration to which is perhaps emblematised here by Moll's strategically positioned phallic sword. The merging of these two meanings in one word suggests their inseparability in this play: Moll's adoption of male dress – an adoption that is not a disguise, for (unlike Shakespeare's cross-dressed heroines) everyone knows she is a woman – quite explicitly calls into question her body and its meanings, both sexual and social. Other characters in the play are all too eager to draw conclusions about the significance of her dress: for Sir Alexander, for example, Moll's refusal of a 'proper' mode of femininity suggests to him that she must also be a thief, whilst for Laxton, it marks her out as a whore. Both assume that other forms of disorderliness will accompany her sartorial choices, and both seek, unsuccessfully, to exploit their (mis)readings of her. Moll thus serves as a touchstone for testing the accuracy, validity and rectitude of the other characters' interpretations and values.

Moll herself explains her cross-dressing in terms that are at once quite distinct from these mistaken ones, and yet help to make sense of them. She argues that it sets her outside the conventional desires and ambitions associated with femininity, specifically with regard to marriage, saying, 'I have no humour to marry . . . I have the head now of myself, and am man enough for a woman; marriage is but a chopping and changing, where a maiden loses one head, and has a worse i'th'place' (II.ii.38–9, 45–8). Furthermore, cross-dressing frees her into an untrammelled and fluid social space, where she is equally at home with and respected by Lord Noland, at one social extreme, and the vagrant rogues Trapdoor and Tearcat, at the other. Here, Moll administers a rough but equitable judicial system, one markedly fairer than the corrupt and manipulable one in the pay of Sir Alexander and Sir Davy (see III.iii and IV.i). Moll also enjoys a carnivalesque allegiance to 'mirth' – an allegiance that, again, Moll says is all too often misread: 'I'm given to sport, I'm often merry,

jest:/Had mirth no kindred in the world but lust?' (III.i.107–8). So whilst her cross-dressing is *mis*recognised in the play as indicative of dishonesty, both sexual and with regard to property, it is *correctly* seen as a comment on the sexual and social mores that position women as subordinate to men, and property as superior to morality.

The figure of Moll thus condenses many of the play's thematic concerns. She is either trigger to, or comment on, the play's various interrogations of the circulation between appearance, gender, sexuality and power, just as she is a structural linchpin, the common element in the various strands of the plot, holding or bringing together those concerning the gentry, the gallants, the citizens and the underworld characters. Moll is without doubt the play's focal point, an object of fascination for the other characters just as the contemporary figure on whom Moll was based, the notorious Mary Frith (c. 1584–1659), was the object of popular fascination for readers and audiences at this time. Like Moll, Frith could be cast as a 'roaring girl': someone who, like her masculine counterparts, the swaggering, brawling 'roaring boys', lived on the margins of civil society, eschewing its conventions and regulations. Whilst the play seeks to capitalise on the contemporary predilection for figures such as Frith, it also seeks to rescue Moll from the social opprobrium that went along with it. As the Prologus makes clear, Moll is not of the common run of roaring girls: 'she flies/With wings more lofty' (lines 25–6); and in part this rescue is effected through her desexualisation. Whilst she exposes the hypocrisy of others' sexual machinations, and smoothes the course of the romance between Sebastian and Mary, she herself remains immune not only to marriage, but also to sexual desire. Moll's status as moral touchstone, it seems, is tenable only through her separation from the appetites that drive, threaten and compromise the other characters. Just as she has no stake in the acquisitiveness that we see in Sir Alexander and Sir Davy, so she has no personal investment in the sexual manoeuvrings of the citizens, their wives and the gallants. It is worth noting, however, that although Moll is at least allowed the pleasure of a moment of 'innocent' acquisitiveness—we see her being fitted for a new outfit in II.ii—there does not seem to be a way in

which to conceptualise a parallel 'innocent' appetite for sexual pleasure in her. It is this immunity to appetite that distinguishes her from the other characters in the play, and which allows her to resolve the dilemmas in which they find themselves.

However, the singularity of Moll as a character should not be allowed to obscure what this play has in common with other city comedies. The generationally based conflict of money versus love, the sub-plots testing and, on the whole, endorsing the citizens' sexual constancy, and the fascination with the underworld can all be found in many other plays of the genre. In this sense, *The Roaring Girl* typifies and extends a generic preoccupation with analysing the fate of conventional meanings of gender and sexuality in the context of fast-changing social circumstances, thereby constituting a series of intriguingly open-ended questions regarding their origins in, and implications for, wider networks of social power relations. It is thus symptomatic of a more general and widespread contemporary anxiety about the instability of traditional values and certainties, which were increasingly under pressure from an emergent capitalism, and the profound social changes which were a part of it.

### Textual note

The text is based on the first edition of the play (in quarto), published in London in 1611. Q in the footnotes here signals a reference to this edition. Elizabeth Cook includes in her edition substantial extracts from the following texts, referred to here in the footnotes:

Awdeley, John (1561) *The Fraternity of Vagabonds*, London.  
 Dekker, Thomas (1608) *The Bellman of London*, London.  
 Dekker, Thomas (1608) *Lantborn and Candlelight*, London.  
 Harman, Thomas, (1566) *A Caveat for Common Cursitors*, London.

### Further reading

#### Editions

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 Bullen, A. H. (ed.) (1885) *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, vol. IV, London: John C. Nimmo.  
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- Ben Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour* (1598)  
William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (1599)  
William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (1601)  
John Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan* (1604)  
Thomas Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1605)  
Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607)  
Ben Jonson, *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609)  
Ben Jonson, *The Alchemist* (1610)  
Thomas Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613)  
Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* (1614)  
Philip Massinger, *The City Madam* (1632)  
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## The Roaring Girl (1611)

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### To the Comic Play-Readers, Venerly and Laughter

The fashion of play-making I can properly compare to nothing so naturally as the alteration in apparel: for in the time of the great crop-doublet, your huge bombasted plays, quilted with mighty words to lean purpose, was only then in fashion. And as the doublet fell, neater inventions began to set up. Now in the time of spruceness, our plays follow the niceness of our garments, single plots, quaint conceits, lecherous jests, dressed up in hanging sleeves, and those are fit for the times and the termers: such a kind of light-colour summer stuff, mingled with diverse colours, you shall find this published comedy, good to keep you in an afternoon from dice, at home in your chambers; and for venerly you shall find enough for sixpence, but well couched and you mark it. For Venus being a woman passes through the play in doublet and breeches, a brave disguise and a safe one, if the statute untie not her codpiece point. The book I make no question but is fit

- 
- Venerly: good hunting, but also the pursuit of sexual pleasure; see III.i.45  
3 crop-doublet: a short, very padded doublet, which went out of fashion about 1580  
4 bombasted: bombast was cotton stuffing, but the word was also used figuratively  
5 only then: i.e. the only thing then  
5-6 the doublet fell: i.e. it became longer  
7 niceness: elegance  
8 single: Mulholland suggests 'simple', since otherwise the description does not fit this or other plays of the time; Cook suggests it may be meant ironically  
quaint conceits: fanciful expressions  
9 hanging sleeves: long, open-cuffed sleeves  
10 termers: those who came to London for the terms of the Inns of Court, whether for amusement or business  
14 sixpence: the usual price of a printed play  
well couched: a) well hidden; b) richly embroidered  
15 and: if  
17 statute: Moll could have been prosecuted for cross-dressing 'in an ecclesiastical court for indecency or uncleanness' (cited by Mulholland)  
18 codpiece point: lace holding up the breeches

for many of your companies, as well as the person itself, and may be allowed both gallery room at the playhouse, and chamber room at your lodging. Worse things I must needs confess the world has taxed her for, than has been written of her; but 'tis the excellency of a writer to leave things better than he finds 'em; though some obscene fellow (that cares not what he writes against others, yet keeps a mystical bawdy-house himself, and entertains drunkards to make use of their pockets and vent his private bottle-ale at midnight)—though such a one would have ripped up the most nasty vice that ever hell belched forth, and presented it to a modest assembly, yet we rather wish in such discoveries, where reputation lies bleeding, a slackness of truth, than fullness of slander.

33  
THOMAS MIDDLETON

### Dramatis personae

SIR ALEXANDER WENGRAVE, *and* NEATFOOT, *his man*

SIR ADAM APPLETON

SIR DAVY DAPPER

SIR BEAUTEOUS GANYMEDE

SIR THOMAS LONG

25 obscene: offensive, loathsome

26 mystical: secret

28 vent . . . bottle-ale: seems to be an obscure sexual joke; 'bottle ale' meant, as well as beer, 'windy rhetoric'; 'vent' meant 'sniff out' as well as 'discharge', and 'bottle' was one of many words for the female genitals (see *Measure for Measure*, III.i.405) (Cook)

29 ripped up: exposed

Dramatis personae: this list follows the Prologus in Q  
1 WENGRAVE: spelt thus in the text, but 'Went-grave' in the Dramatis Personae, suggesting he 'went grave' in response to the dowry to be brought by Mary Fitzallard if she married his son; see I.i.83-96

NEATFOOT: spelt thus in the text, but Neats-foot in the Dramatis Personae. A neats-foot was an ox-foot used for food

4 SIR BEAUTEOUS GANYMEDE: Ganymede was cup-bearer to the gods. The name had homosexual connotations ('catamite' is derived from it)

LORD NOLAND

*Young* SEBASTIAN WENGRAVEJACK DAPPER, *and* GULL, *his page*

GOSHAWK

GREENWIT

LAXTON

TILTYARD, *a feather-seller*OPENWORK, *a sempster*GALLIPOT, *an apothecary*MOLL, *the Roaring Girl*

TRAPDOOR

TEARCAT

SIR GUY FITZALLARD

MARY FITZALLARD, *his daughter*CURTILAX, *a Sergeant, and*HANGER, *his Yeoman**Ministri**Coachman, Porter, Tailor, Gentlemen, Cutpurses, Fellow*

- 8 JACK DAPPER: Mulholland notes that the term 'dapper jack' was commonly used scornfully or mockingly; see *Edward II*, I.iv.413
- 11 LAXTON: play on 'lack-stone': he has sold his land (III.i.51) and he is impotent ('stones' meant testicles); see I.ii.55-8
- 12 TILTYARD: a tiltyard was a jousting ground; the character is 'so named for the abundant use of feathers by tiltyard combatants' (Mulholland). 'Yard' also meant penis
- 13 OPENWORK: work featuring a pattern of holes, such as lace or crochet; the openness extends to his character  
*Cives et Uxores*: citizens and their wives
- 14 GALLIPOT: a gallipot was a small glazed pot used for medicines
- 15 MOLL: a general name for whores; a diminutive of 'Mary', a name signifying chastity. For 'roaring girl', see headnote, p. 327
- 16 TRAPDOOR: so called because of the danger he presents to others: see I.ii.246-7. Cook suggests that he might initially have appeared and disappeared through the trapdoor in the stage, to accentuate 'the infernal atmosphere he carries with him' (p. xxiv)
- 17 TEARCAT: a bully or swaggerer
- 20 CURTILAX: a cutlass
- 21 HANGER: a loop on a belt on which a sword was hung, or the sword itself
- 22 *Ministri*: servants

## Prologus

A play expected long makes the audience look  
For wonders: that each scene should be a book,  
Composed to all perfection; each one comes  
And brings a play in's head with him: up he sums  
10 What he would of a roaring girl have writ;  
If that he finds not here, he mews at it.  
Only we entreat you think our scene  
Cannot speak high (the subject being but mean);  
A roaring girl, whose notes till now never were,  
10 Shall fill with laughter our vast theatre,  
That's all which I dare promise: tragic passion,  
And such grave stuff, is this day out of fashion.  
I see attention sets wide ope her gates  
Of hearing, and with covetous listening waits,  
To know what girl this roaring girl should be,  
For of that tribe are many. One is she  
That roars at midnight in deep tavern bowls,  
That beats the watch, and constables controls;  
Another roars i'th'daytime, swears, stabs, gives  
braves,  
20 Yet sells her soul to the lust of fools and slaves.  
Both these are suburb-roarers. Then there's  
besides  
A civil city-roaring girl, whose pride,  
Feasting, and riding, shakes her husband's state,  
And leaves him roaring through an iron grate.  
None of these roaring girls is ours: she flies  
With wings more lofty. Thus her character lies,  
Yet what need characters, when to give a guess  
Is better than the person to express?  
But would you know who 'tis? Would you hear her  
name?  
She is called Mad Moll; her life our acts proclaim. 30

6 mews: jeers by mewing  
10 vast theatre: the Fortune was large (about 1,842 sq. ft., capable of holding over 3,000 playgoers), but not excessively so: the Globe, for example, was 2,500 sq. ft., and could take over 3,500 playgoers; see Gurr 1996: 18-21  
17 bowls: broad drinking cups  
18 watch: street patrol which acted as police; they were in the charge of a constable  
19 gives braves: makes a show of defiance (Mulholland)  
21 suburb-roarers: the suburbs lay outside the city walls, beyond the jurisdiction of the city authorities; they were thus identified with those wary of the law, such as prostitutes and thieves  
24 iron grate: i.e. of a prison

## Act I, scene i

*Enter MARY FITZALLARD disguised like a sempster with a case for bands, and NEATFOOT a serving-man with her, with a napkin on his shoulder and a trencher in his hand, as from table*

NEATFOOT The young gentleman, our young master, Sir Alexander's son, is it into his ears, sweet damsel, emblem of fragility, you desire to have a message transported, or to be transcendent?

MARY A private word or two, sir, nothing else.

NEATFOOT You shall fructify in that which you come for: your pleasure shall be satisfied to your full contentation: I will, fairest tree of generation, watch when our young master is erected, that is to say, up, and deliver him to this your most white hand. 10

MARY Thanks, sir.

NEATFOOT And withal certify him, that I have culled out for him, now his belly is replenished, a daintier bit or modicum than any lay upon his trencher at dinner. Hath he notion of your name, I beseech your chastity?

MARY One, sir, of whom he bespake falling bands.

NEATFOOT Falling bands, it shall so be given him.—If you please to venture your modesty in the hall, amongst a curl-pated company of rude serving-men, and take such as they can set before you, you shall be most seriously, and ingeniously welcome. 22

MARY I have dined indeed already, sir.

NEATFOOT Or will you vouchsafe to kiss the lip of a cup of rich Orleans in the buttery amongst our waiting-women?

MARY Not now in truth, sir.

NEATFOOT Our young master shall then have a feeling of your being here: presently it shall so be given him.

*Exit NEATFOOT*

MARY I humbly thank you, sir. But that my bosom 30

Is full of bitter sorrows, I could smile  
To see this formal ape play antic tricks:  
But in my breast a poisoned arrow sticks,  
And smiles cannot become me. Love woven slightly  
(Such as thy false heart makes) wears out as lightly,  
But love being truly bred i'th'soul (like mine)  
Bleeds even to death, at the least wound it takes:  
The more we quench this fire, the less it slakes.  
Oh me!

*Enter SEBASTIAN WENGRAVE with NEATFOOT*

SEBASTIAN A sempster speak with me, sayest thou? 40

NEATFOOT Yes sir, she's there, *viva voce*, to deliver her auricular confession.

SEBASTIAN With me, sweetheart? What is't?

MARY I have brought home your bands, sir.

SEBASTIAN Bands?—Neatfoot.

NEATFOOT Sir.

SEBASTIAN Prithee look in, for all the gentlemen are upon rising.

NEATFOOT Yes sir, a most methodical attendance shall be given.

SEBASTIAN And dost hear? If my father call for me, say I am busy with a sempster. 51

NEATFOOT Yes sir, he shall know it that you are busied with a needlewoman.

SEBASTIAN In's ear, good Neatfoot.

NEATFOOT It shall be so given him. *Exit NEATFOOT*

SEBASTIAN Bands? You're mistaken, sweetheart, I bespake none. When, where, I prithee? What bands? Let me see them.

MARY Yes sir, a bond fast sealed, with solemn oaths, Subscribed unto (as I thought) with your soul, 60  
Delivered as your deed in sight of heaven.

Is this bond cancelled, have you forgot me?

SEBASTIAN Ha! Life of my life, Sir Guy Fitzallard's daughter,

What has transformed my love to this strange shape?  
Stay: make all sure. (*Shuts door*)—So: now speak and be brief,

Because the wolf's at door that lies in wait  
To prey upon us both. Albeit mine eyes  
Are blessed by thine, yet this so strange disguise  
Holds me with fear and wonder.

MARY Mine's a loathed sight,

34 slightly: loosely

38 fire: eds (Q omits)

41 *viva voce*: by word of mouth

42 auricular confession: a term usually used of confession to a priest; the insinuation is the confession of sexual misdemeanours

53 needlewoman: 'needle' had sense of 'penis' at this time (Mulholland); hence sexual pun on 'prostitute'

59 bond: 'bond' and 'band' were used interchangeably

66 the wolf's at door: proverbial

Act I, scene i: the only scene heading in Q. We follow divisions introduced by other eds here

SD *sempster*: this form of the word was applicable to both men and women at this time

*case for bands*: a box for collar-bands

*trencher*: wooden plate or dish, used before pewter was commonplace

4 transcendent: affected language typical of Neatfoot; the exact meaning is unclear, but he uses it to imply a private meeting between Mary and Sebastian

6 fructify . . . come for: sexual quibbles such as these continue through Neatfoot's speeches in this scene

17 falling bands: collars worn falling flat round the neck

22 ingeniously: ingenuously (the two words were often confused)

23 dined: eds (dyed Q)

25 Orleans: wine from the Loire area

29 presently: immediately

- Why from it are you banished else so long? 70  
 SEBASTIAN I must cut short my speech: in broken  
 language,  
 Thus much, sweet Moll: I must thy company shun,  
 I court another Moll, my thoughts must run  
 As a horse runs that's blind, round in a mill,  
 Out every step, yet keeping one path still.  
 MARY Hm! Must you shun my company? In one knot  
 Have both our hands by th'hands of heaven been tied,  
 Now to be broke? I thought me once your bride:  
 Our fathers did agree on the time when;  
 And must another bedfellow fill my room? 80  
 SEBASTIAN Sweet maid, let's lose no time: 'tis in  
 heaven's book  
 Set down, that I must have thee: an oath we took  
 To keep our vows; but when the knight your father  
 Was from mine parted, storms began to sit  
 Upon my covetous father's brows, which fell  
 From them on me: he reckoned up what gold  
 This marriage would draw from him, at which he  
 swore,  
 To lose so much blood could not grieve him more.  
 He then dissuades me from thee, called thee not fair,  
 And asked what is she but a beggar's heir? 90  
 He scorned thy dowry of five thousand marks.  
 If such a sum of money could be found,  
 And I would match with that, he'd not undo it,  
 Provided his bags might add nothing to it,  
 But vowed, if I took thee, nay more, did swear it,  
 Save birth, from him I nothing should inherit.  
 MARY What follows then—my shipwreck?  
 SEBASTIAN Dearest, no:  
 Though wildly in a labyrinth I go,  
 My end is to meet thee: with a side wind  
 Must I now sail, else I no haven can find,  
 But both must sink forever. There's a wench 100  
 Called Moll, mad Moll, or merry Moll, a creature  
 So strange in quality, a whole city takes  
 Note of her name and person: all that affection  
 I owe to thee, on her in counterfeit passion  
 I spend to mad my father: he believes

74 horse . . . mill: proverbial. A horse that turned a millstone walked in constant circles round the stone  
 76–83 one knot . . . our vows: these lines suggest that Sebastian and Mary have already taken vows that bind them legally: they 'have apparently entered into a precontract known as "spousals *de futuro*" . . . If *bedfellow* [l. 80] implies "carnal Copulation" . . . their spousals have become the equivalent of matrimony' (Mulholland)  
 91 five thousand marks: a mark (which was an amount, not a coin) was worth two-thirds of a pound sterling. This, then, was the equivalent of £3,333, a considerable sum of money, and well above the usual marriage settlement amongst the gentry; see Mulholland, p. 58, n. 65  
 106 mad: madden

- I doat upon this roaring girl, and grieves  
 As it becomes a father for a son  
 That could be so bewitched; yet I'll go on  
 This crooked way, sigh still for her, feign dreams 110  
 In which I'll talk only of her: these streams  
 Shall, I hope, force my father to consent  
 That here I anchor, rather than be rent  
 Upon a rock so dangerous. Art thou pleased,  
 Because thou seest we are waylaid, that I take  
 A path that's safe, though it be far about?  
 MARY My prayers with heaven guide thee!  
 SEBASTIAN Then I will on.  
 My father is at hand, kiss and begone;  
 Hours shall be watched for meetings; I must now,  
 As men for fear, to a strange idol bow. 120  
 MARY Farewell.  
 SEBASTIAN I'll guide thee forth: when next we meet,  
 A story of Moll shall make our mirth more sweet.  
*Exeunt*

## Act I, scene ii

- Enter* SIR ALEXANDER WENGRAVE, SIR DAVY DAPPER,  
 SIR ADAM APPLETON, GOSHAWK, LAXTON, *and*  
 GENTLEMEN  
 OMNES Thanks, good Sir Alexander, for our bounteous  
 cheer.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Fie, fie, in giving thanks you pay too  
 dear.  
 SIR DAVY When bounty spreads the table, faith 'twere  
 sin,  
 At going off, if thanks should not step in.  
 SIR ALEXANDER No more of thanks, no more. Ay,  
 marry sir,  
 Th'inner room was too close; how do you like  
 This parlour, gentlemen?  
 OMNES Oh passing well.  
 SIR ADAM What a sweet breath the air casts here, so  
 cool!  
 GOSHAWK I like the prospect best.  
 LAXTON See how 'tis furnished.  
 SIR DAVY A very fair sweet room.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Sir Davy Dapper, 10  
 The furniture that doth adorn this room  
 Cost many a fair grey groat ere it came here,  
 But good things are most cheap, when they're most  
 dear.

11–32 these lines have been taken to describe the Fortune theatre, with its socially diverse audience  
 12 grey groat: a groat was a coin worth about 4d (about 1.5 pence); Sir Alexander is here boasting of his lavish spending on his house and furnishings  
 13 good things . . . dear: version of a proverb: 'the best is best cheap', Tilley, B319



Nay when you look into my galleries,  
 How bravely they are trimmed up, you all shall swear  
 You're highly pleased to see what's set down there:  
 Stories of men and women, mixed together  
 Fair ones with foul, like sunshine in wet weather;  
 Within one square a thousand heads are laid  
 So close that all of heads the room seems made; 20  
 As many faces there, filled with blithe looks,  
 Show like the promising titles of new books  
 Writ merrily, the readers being their own eyes,  
 Which seem to move and to give plaudities;  
 And here and there, whilst with obsequious ears  
 Thronged heaps do listen, a cutpurse thrusts and leers  
 With hawk's eyes for his prey; I need not show him:  
 By a hanging villainous look yourselves may know  
 him,  
 The face is drawn so rarely. Then sir, below,  
 The very floor, as 'twere, waves to and fro, 30  
 And like a floating island seems to move,  
 Upon a sea bound in with shores above.

*Enter SEBASTIAN and MASTER GREENWIT*

OMNES These sights are excellent.

SIR ALEXANDER I'll show you all:

Since we are met, make our parting comical.

SEBASTIAN This gentleman, my friend, will take his  
 leave, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER Ha, take his leave, Sebastian? Who?

SEBASTIAN This gentleman.

SIR ALEXANDER Your love, sir, has already given me  
 some time,

And if you please to trust my age with more,

It shall pay double interest: good sir, stay.

GREENWIT I have been too bold.

SIR ALEXANDER Not so, sir. A merry day  
 'Mongst friends being spent, is better than gold  
 saved. 41

14-20 Nay . . . made: 'Sir Alexander's collection suggests a parody of the great collections which began to be made in Elizabeth's reign . . . Pictures were sometimes fixed to the wall so close together as to make a mosaic covering the wall entirely' (Cook)

galleries: a) for the exhibition of art works; b) the balconies of the Fortune theatre

15 bravely . . . trimmed up: finely they are decorated

19 one square: the Fortune theatre was, unlike the other 'public' theatres, built on a square plan a thousand heads: Elizabethan theatres could easily hold around 3,000 spectators; see Prologus, l. 10n

24 plaudities: rounds of applause

26 a cutpurse: a thief or pickpocket who cut his victims' purses from their belts. Cutpurses were one of the hazards of playgoing

30-1 The very floor . . . island: i.e. the stage is floating on a sea of seething spectators

34 comical: happy

Some wine, some wine. Where be these knaves I  
 keep?

*Enter three or four SERVING-MEN, and NEATFOOT*

NEATFOOT At your worshipful elbow, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER You are kissing my maids, drinking, or  
 fast asleep.

NEATFOOT Your worship has given it us right.

SIR ALEXANDER You varlets, stir:  
 Chairs, stools, and cushions: prithee Sir Davy Dapper,  
 Make that chair thine.

SIR DAVY 'Tis but an easy gift,

And yet I thank you for it, sir, I'll take it.

SIR ALEXANDER A chair for old Sir Adam Appleton. 49

NEATFOOT A back friend to your worship.

SIR ADAM Marry, good Neatfoot,  
 I thank thee for it: back friends sometimes are good.

SIR ALEXANDER Pray make that stool your perch, good  
 Master Goshawk.

GOSHAWK I stoop to your lure, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER Son Sebastian,  
 Take Master Greenwit to you.

SEBASTIAN Sit, dear friend.

SIR ALEXANDER Nay Master Laxton—furnish Master  
 Laxton

With what he wants, a stone—a stool I would say,  
 A stool.

LAXTON I had rather stand, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER I know you had,  
 Good Master Laxton. So, so.

*Exeunt NEATFOOT and SERVANTS*

Now here's a mess of friends; and, gentlemen,  
 Because time's glass shall not be running long, 60  
 I'll quicken it with a pretty tale.

SIR DAVY Good tales do well  
 In these bad days, where vice does so excel.

SIR ADAM Begin, Sir Alexander.

SIR ALEXANDER Last day I met  
 An aged man upon whose head was scored  
 A debt of just so many years as these  
 Which I owe to my grave; the man you all know.

45 varlets: a) servants; b) knaves

50 back friend: a backer or supporter, with allusion to a variant meaning: a false friend

52-3 perch . . . stoop to your lure: playing on Goshawk's name: 'stoop' meant 'submit'; a 'lure' was a falconer's apparatus for recalling a hawk (eds)

56-8 eds' lineation (With what . . . stoole/I had . . . stand, sir/I know . . . Q)

56 what . . . stone: a play on Laxton's name (i.e. lack-stone); 'stone' meant testicle; see 'Dramatis Personae' l. 10n

57 stand: with pun ('stand' meant to have an erection)

59 mess: company

60 Because . . . long: 'so that time should not hang heavy on us' (Cook)

- OMNES His name I pray you, sir.
- SIR ALEXANDER Nay, you shall pardon me.  
But when he saw me (with a sigh that brake,  
Or seemed to break, his heart-strings) thus he spake:  
Oh my good knight, says he (and then his eyes 70  
Were richer even by that which made them poor,  
They had spent so many tears they had no more),  
Oh sir, says he, you know it, for you ha' seen  
Blessings to rain upon mine house and me:  
Fortune, who slaves men, was my slave; her wheel  
Hath spun me golden threads, for, I thank heaven,  
I ne'er had but one cause to curse my stars.  
I asked him then what that one cause might be.
- OMNES So, sir.
- SIR ALEXANDER He paused; and as we often see  
A sea so much becalmed there can be found 80  
No wrinkle on his brow, his waves being drowned  
In their own rage; but when th'imperious winds  
Use strange invisible tyranny to shake  
Both heaven's and earth's foundation at their noise,  
The seas, swelling with wrath to part that fray,  
Rise up, and are more wild, more mad than they—  
Even so, this good old man was by my question  
Stirred up to roughness, you might see his gall  
Flow even in's eyes; then grew he fantastical.
- SIR DAVY Fantastical? Ha, ha.
- SIR ALEXANDER Yes, and talked oddly. 90
- SIR ADAM Pray sir, proceed,  
How did this old man end?
- SIR ALEXANDER Marry sir, thus.  
He left his wild fit to read o'er his cards;  
Yet then (though age cast snow on all his hairs)  
He joyed because, says he, the god of gold  
Has been to me no niggard; that disease  
Of which all old men sicken, avarice,  
Never infected me—
- LAXTON (*Aside*) He means not himself, I'm sure.
- SIR ALEXANDER For like a lamp  
Fed with continual oil, I spend and throw 100  
My light to all that need it, yet have still  
Enough to serve myself; oh but, quoth he,  
Though heaven's dew fall thus on this aged tree,  
I have a son that's like a wedge doth cleave  
My very heart-root.
- SIR DAVY Had he such a son?
- SEBASTIAN (*Aside*) Now I do smell a fox strongly.
- SIR ALEXANDER Let's see: no, Master Greenwit is not  
yet  
So mellow in years as he; but as like Sebastian,
- Just like my son Sebastian—such another. 109
- SEBASTIAN (*Aside*) How finely, like a fencer, my father  
fetches his by-blows to hit me, but if I beat you not  
at your own weapon of subtlety—
- SIR ALEXANDER This son, saith he, that should be  
The column and main arch unto my house,  
The crutch unto my age, becomes a whirlwind  
Shaking the firm foundation—
- SIR ADAM 'Tis some prodigal.
- SEBASTIAN (*Aside*) Well shot, old Adam Bell.
- SIR ALEXANDER No city monster neither, no prodigal,  
But sparing, wary, civil, and (though wifeless)  
An excellent husband, and such a traveller, 120  
He has more tongues in his head than some have  
teeth.
- SIR DAVY I have but two in mine.
- GOSHAWK So sparing and so wary:  
What then could vex his father so?
- SIR ALEXANDER Oh, a woman.
- SEBASTIAN A flesh-fly, that can vex any man.
- SIR ALEXANDER A scurvy woman,  
On whom the passionate old man swore he doated;  
A creature, saith he, nature hath brought forth  
To mock the sex of woman. It is a thing  
One knows not how to name: her birth began  
Ere she was all made: 'tis woman more than man, 130  
Man more than woman, and (which to none can hap)  
The sun gives her two shadows to one shape;  
Nay more, let this strange thing walk, stand or sit,  
No blazing star draws more eyes after it.
- SIR DAVY A monster, 'tis some monster.
- SIR ALEXANDER She's a varlet.
- SEBASTIAN (*Aside*) Now is my cue to bristle.
- SIR ALEXANDER A naughty pack.
- SEBASTIAN 'Tis false.
- SIR ALEXANDER Ha, boy?
- SEBASTIAN 'Tis false.
- SIR ALEXANDER What's false? I say she's naught.
- SEBASTIAN I say that tongue  
That dares speak so, but yours, sticks in the throat  
Of a rank villain. Set yourself aside— 140
- SIR ALEXANDER So sir, what then?
- SEBASTIAN Any here else had lied.
- 
- 111 by-blows: side-strokes from a sword  
117 Adam Bell: famous archer and outlaw who figures in a  
number of ballads  
125 flesh-fly: a fly which lives on, and lays its eggs on, dead  
flesh  
126 he: i.e. his son  
134 blazing star: i.e. a meteor, taken as an ill omen  
137 naughty pack: person of bad or worthless character  
138 naught: wicked, perhaps with play on 'nothing'. The play  
is picked up by Laxton in l. 157; see *A Woman Killed with  
Kindness*, xvi.91 for similar wordplay  
139 but: except
- 
- 85 part that fray: 'i.e. end the disturbance begun by the  
wind' (Mulholland)  
86 they: i.e. the winds  
99 He . . . sure: the aside interrupts Sir Alexander's  
complete blank verse line

(*Aside*) I think I shall fit you.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Lie?  
 SEBASTIAN Yes.  
 SIR DAVY Doth this concern him?  
 SIR ALEXANDER Ah sirrah boy,  
 Is your blood heated? Boils it? Are you stung?  
 I'll pierce you deeper yet.—Oh my dear friends,  
 I am that wretched father, this that son,  
 That sees his ruin, yet headlong on doth run.  
 SIR ADAM Will you love such a poison?  
 SIR DAVY Fie, fie.  
 SEBASTIAN Y'are all mad.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Th'art sick at heart, yet feel'st it not.  
 Of all these,  
 What gentleman but thou, knowing his disease 150  
 Mortal, would shun the cure? Oh Master Greenwit,  
 Would you to such an idol bow?  
 GREENWIT Not I, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Here's Master Laxton, has he mind to  
 a woman  
 As thou hast?  
 LAXTON No, not I, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Sir, I know it.  
 LAXTON Their good parts are so rare, their bad so  
 common,  
 I will have nought to do with any woman.  
 SIR DAVY 'Tis well done, Master Laxton.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Oh thou cruel boy,  
 Thou would'st with lust an old man's life destroy;  
 Because thou see'st I'm half-way in my grave,  
 Thou shovel'st dust upon me: would thou might'st have  
 Thy wish, most wicked, most unnatural! 161  
 SIR DAVY Why sir, 'tis thought Sir Guy Fitzallard's  
 daughter  
 Shall wed your son Sebastian.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Sir Davy Dapper,  
 I have upon my knees wooed this fond boy  
 To take that virtuous maiden.  
 SEBASTIAN Hark you a word, sir.  
 You on your knees have cursed that virtuous maiden,  
 And me for loving her, yet do you now  
 Thus baffle me to my face? Wear not your knees  
 In such entreats, give me Fitzallard's daughter.  
 SIR ALEXANDER I'll give thee rats-bane rather.  
 SEBASTIAN Well then you know  
 What dish I mean to feed upon. 171  
 SIR ALEXANDER Hark gentlemen, he swears  
 To have this cutpurse drab, to spite my gall.  
 OMNES Master Sebastian—  
 SEBASTIAN I am deaf to you all.

142 fit you: a) provide you with what is necessary; b) punish  
 you  
 164 fond: foolish  
 168 baffle: a) hoodwink, cheat; b) disgrace

I'm so bewitched, so bound to my desires,  
 Tears, prayers, threats, nothing can quench out those  
 fires  
 That burn within me. *Exit*  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Her blood shall quench it then.  
 —Lose him not, oh dissuade him, gentlemen.  
 SIR DAVY He shall be weaned, I warrant you.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Before his eyes  
 Lay down his shame, my grief, his miseries. 180  
 OMNES No more, no more, away.  
*Exeunt all but* SIR ALEXANDER  
 SIR ALEXANDER I wash a negro,  
 Losing both pains and cost: but take thy flight,  
 I'll be most near thee when I'm least in sight.  
 Wild buck, I'll hunt thee breathless, thou shalt run  
 on,  
 But I will turn thee when I'm not thought upon.  
*Enter* RALPH TRAPDOOR  
 Now sirrah, what are you? Leave your ape's tricks and  
 speak.  
 TRAPDOOR A letter from my captain to your worship.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Oh, oh, now I remember, 'tis to prefer  
 thee into my service. 190  
 TRAPDOOR To be a shifter under your worship's nose of  
 a clean trencher, when there's a good bit upon't.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Troth, honest fellow—(*Aside*) Hm—  
 ha—let me see,  
 This knave shall be the axe to hew that down  
 At which I stumble, 'has a face that promiseth  
 Much of a villain; I will grind his wit,  
 And if the edge prove fine make use of it.  
 —Come hither sirrah, canst thou be secret, ha?  
 TRAPDOOR As two crafty attorneys plotting the  
 undoing of their clients. 200  
 SIR ALEXANDER Didst never, as thou has walked about  
 this town,  
 Hear of a wench called Moll, mad merry Moll?  
 TRAPDOOR Moll Cutpurse, sir?  
 SIR ALEXANDER The same; dost thou know her then?  
 TRAPDOOR As well as I know 'twill rain upon Simon  
 and Jude's day next. I will sift all the taverns i'th'city,  
 and drink half-pots with all the watermen

181-2 I wash . . . cost: proverbial  
 185 turn: check, deflect (hunting term)  
 188 captain: Trapdoor is a discharged soldier. Mulholland  
 notes that there were numerous statutes in the reigns of  
 Elizabeth and James dealing with the problems  
 associated with discharged soldiers turned beggars and  
 vagrants  
 189 prefer: advance  
 205-6 Simon and Jude's day: 28 October, a day associated  
 with the Lord Mayor's pageants put on by the City livery  
 companies (held on the following day), and frequently  
 stormy

o'th'Bankside, but if you will, sir, I'll find her out.  
 SIR ALEXANDER That task is easy, do't then. Hold thy hand up:  
 What's this? Is't burnt? 210  
 TRAPDOOR No sir, no, a little singed with making fireworks.  
 SIR ALEXANDER There's money, spend it; that being spent, fetch more.  
 TRAPDOOR Oh sir, that all the poor soldiers in England had such a leader! For fetching, no water-spaniel is like me.  
 SIR ALEXANDER This wench we speak of strays so from her kind,  
 Nature repents she made her. 'Tis a mermaid Has tolled my son to shipwreck.  
 TRAPDOOR I'll cut her comb for you. 220  
 SIR ALEXANDER I'll tell out gold for thee then; hunt her forth,  
 Cast out a line hung full of silver hooks  
 To catch her to thy company: deep spendings  
 May draw her that's most chaste to a man's bosom.  
 TRAPDOOR The jingling of golden bells, and a good fool with a hobby-horse, will draw all the whores i'th'town to dance in a morris.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Or rather (for that's best—they say sometimes  
 She goes in breeches) follow her as her man.  
 TRAPDOOR And when her breeches are off, she shall follow me. 231  
 SIR ALEXANDER Beat all thy brains to serve her.  
 TRAPDOOR Zounds sir, as country wenches beat cream, till butter comes.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Play thou the subtle spider, weave fine nets  
 To ensnare her very life.  
 TRAPDOOR Her life?  
 SIR ALEXANDER Yes, suck

207–8 watermen o'th'Bankside: boatmen offering their boats for hire; it was estimated by a contemporary that there were 40,000 of them working between Gravesend and Windsor. The Bankside, Southwark, south of the Thames, was the location of several theatres and many brothels  
 210 burnt: i.e. branded, as a felon's would be  
 218 mermaid: regarded as sinister, and often associated with the Sirens (fabulous female creatures who lured sailors to shipwreck with their song)  
 220 cut her comb: humiliate; proverbial (cutting a cock's comb was a usual accompaniment of gelding)  
 221 tell out: count out  
 226 hobby-horse: part of a fool's equipment, but also a pantomime horse which had a part in the Morris dance; 'hobby-horse' could also mean 'whore'  
 229 man: i.e. manservant  
 232 serve: 'not just as a servant but as a stallion serves a mare' (Cook)

Her heart-blood if thou canst; twist thou but cords  
 To catch her, I'll find law to hang her up.  
 TRAPDOOR Spoke like a worshipful bencher.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Trace all her steps: at this she-fox's den 240  
 Watch what lambs enter; let me play the shepherd  
 To save their throats from bleeding, and cut hers.  
 TRAPDOOR This is the goll shall do't.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Be firm, and gain me  
 Ever thine own. This done, I entertain thee:  
 How is thy name?  
 TRAPDOOR My name, sir, is Ralph Trapdoor, honest Ralph.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Trapdoor, be like thy name, a dangerous step  
 For her to venture on, but unto me—  
 TRAPDOOR As fast as your sole to your boot or shoe, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Hence then, be little seen here as thou canst, 250  
 I'll still be at thine elbow.  
 TRAPDOOR The trapdoor's set.  
 Moll, if you budge y'are gone. This me shall crown:  
 A roaring boy the roaring girl puts down.  
 SIR ALEXANDER God-a-mercy, lose no time.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene i

*The three shops open in a rank: the first a pothecary's shop, the next a feathershop, the third a sempster's shop:*

MISTRESS GALLIPOT *in the first*, MISTRESS TILTYARD *in the next*, MASTER OPENWORK *and his WIFE in the third*.  
*To them enters LAXTON, GOSHAWK, and GREENWIT*

MISTRESS OPENWORK Gentlemen, what is't you lack?  
 What is't you buy? See fine bands and ruffs, fine lawns, fine cambrics. What is't you lack, gentlemen, what is't you buy?  
 LAXTON Yonder's the shop.  
 GOSHAWK Is that she?  
 LAXTON Peace.  
 GREENWIT She that minces tobacco?  
 LAXTON Ay: she's a gentlewoman born, I can tell you,

239 bencher: magistrate  
 243 goll: cant word for 'hand'. Cant was the specialist slang associated with beggars and thieves  
 244 entertain: take into service  
 246 Ralph: pronounced Rafe; a common name for servants in contemporary plays  
 SD rank: row  
 1–2 what . . . buy: standard street cry of pedlars and shopkeepers  
 3 lawns . . . cambrics: both were kinds of fine linen  
 8 minces: shreds. Apothecaries commonly sold tobacco

though it be her hard fortune now to shred Indian  
 pot-herbs. II  
 GOSHAWK Oh sir, 'tis many a good woman's fortune,  
 when her husband turns bankrupt, to begin with  
 pipes and set up again.  
 LAXTON And indeed the raising of the woman is the  
 lifting up of the man's head at all times: if one  
 flourish, t'other will bud as fast, I warrant ye.  
 GOSHAWK Come, thou'rt familiarly acquainted there, I  
 grope that.  
 LAXTON And you grope no better i'th'dark, you may  
 chance lie i'th'ditch when you're drunk. 2I  
 GOSHAWK Go, thou'rt a mystical lecher.  
 LAXTON I will not deny but my credit may take up an  
 ounce of pure smoke.  
 GOSHAWK May take up an ell of pure smock. Away, go.  
*(Aside)* 'Tis the closest striker. Life, I think he  
 commits venery forty foot deep, no man's aware on't.  
 I, like a palpable smockster, go to work so openly  
 with the tricks of art, that I'm as apparently seen as a  
 naked boy in a vial, and were it not for a gift of  
 treachery that I have in me to betray my friend when  
 he puts most trust in me—mass, yonder he is, too—  
 and by his injury to make good my access to her, I  
 should appear as defective in courting as a farmer's  
 son the first day of his feather, that doth nothing at  
 court but woo the hangings and glass windows for a  
 month together, and some broken waiting-woman  
 for ever after. I find those imperfections in my venery  
 that, were't not for flattery and falsehood, I should  
 want discourse and impudence, and he that wants  
 impudence among women is worthy to be kicked out  
 at bed's feet. He shall not see me yet. 42  
 GREENWIT Troth this is finely shred.  
 LAXTON Oh, women are the best mincers.

II pot-herbs: any herbs grown for boiling in a pot; here,  
 presumably tobacco  
 14 pipes: tobacco, a new commodity, was good business; but  
 'pipe' here also has sexual quibble ('penis'); see l. 52  
 below, and *Romeo and Juliet*, IV.iv.123  
 15-16 raising . . . head: with sexual innuendo  
 19 grope: understand, but with sexual innuendo  
 20 And: if  
 22 mystical: secret  
 25 take up . . . smock: lift up a woman's underskirt; see *The  
 Taming of the Shrew*, IV.iii.153-4. An 'ell' was 45 inches  
 26 closest striker: most secret fornicator  
 28 smockster: bawd  
 29-30 naked . . . vial: obscure, but Cook suggests that 'the  
 point is presumably the visibility of nakedness seen  
 through clear glass'  
 31 my friend: i.e. Openwork  
 35 first day . . . feather: 'the feather has been acquired to  
 gentrify his appearance' (Cook)  
 37 broken: violated, defiled  
 44 mincers: i.e. of tobacco, and of words

MISTRESS GALLIPOT 'T had been a good phrase for a  
 cook's wife, sir.  
 LAXTON But 'twill serve generally, like the front of a  
 new almanac, as thus: calculated for the meridian of  
 cook's wives, but generally for all Englishwomen. 49  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Nay, you shall ha't, sir, I have  
 filled it for you. *She puts it to the fire*  
 LAXTON The pipe's in a good hand, and I wish mine  
 always so.  
 GREENWIT But not to be used o'that fashion.  
 LAXTON Oh pardon me, sir, I understand no French. I  
 pray be covered. Jack, a pipe of rich smoke.  
 GOSHAWK Rich smoke? That's sixpence a pipe, is't?  
 GREENWIT To me, sweet lady.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT *(Aside to LAXTON)* Be not  
 forgetful; respect my credit; seem strange: art and wit  
 makes a fool of suspicion; pray be wary. 6I  
 LAXTON Push, I warrant you:—Come, how is't,  
 gallants?  
 GREENWIT Pure and excellent.  
 LAXTON I thought 'twas good, you were grown so  
 silent; you are like those that love not to talk at  
 victuals, though they make a worse noise i'the nose  
 than a common fiddler's prentice, and discourse a  
 whole supper with snuffling.—I must speak a word  
 with you anon. 70  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Make your way wisely then.  
 GOSHAWK Oh what else, sir? He's perfection itself, full  
 of manners, but not an acre of ground belonging to  
 'em.  
 GREENWIT Ay and full of form, h'as ne'er a good stool  
 in's chamber.  
 GOSHAWK But above all religious: he preyeth daily  
 upon elder brothers.  
 GREENWIT And valiant above measure: h'as run three  
 streets from a sergeant. 80  
 LAXTON Puh, puh. *He blows tobacco in their faces*  
 GREENWIT and GOSHAWK Oh, puh, ho, ho.  
 LAXTON So, so.

48 almanac: 'almanacs giving astrological and other  
 predictions were sold cheaply to the gullible'  
 (Mulholland)  
 55 French: i.e. bawdy language  
 56 be covered: put on your hat (to Goshawk)  
 60 credit: reputation  
 seem strange: i.e. do not be too familiar with me  
 62 Push: an interjection  
 67-9 noise . . . snuffling: Mulholland points out that 'fiddle'  
 carried sexual implications, so that a 'fiddler's prentice'  
 may be 'assistant to a bawd'; the 'noise i'th'nose' and  
 'snuffling' may refer to the effects of venereal disease  
 72 He's: i.e. Laxton is  
 manners: punning on 'manors'; see *A Woman Killed with  
 Kindness*, xvi.9  
 75 form: propriety, etiquette, with pun on 'bench'

MISTRESS GALLIPOT What's the matter now, sir?  
 LAXTON I protest I'm in extreme want of money. If you can supply me now with any means, you do me the greatest pleasure, next to the bounty of your love, as ever poor gentleman tasted.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT What's the sum would pleasure ye, sir? Though you deserve nothing less at my hands. 90  
 LAXTON Why, 'tis but for want of opportunity thou know'st. (*Aside*) I put her off with opportunity still. By this light I hate her, but for means to keep me in fashion with gallants; for what I take from her, I spend upon other wenches, bear her in hand still; she has wit enough to rob her husband, and I ways enough to consume the money.—Why, how now? What? The chincough?  
 GOSHAWK Thou hast the cowardliest trick to come before a man's face and strangle him ere he be aware: I could find in my heart to make a quarrel in earnest. 100  
 LAXTON Pox, and thou dost—thou know'st I never use to fight with my friends—thou'll but lose thy labour in't.—Jack Dapper!

*Enter JACK DAPPER, and his man GULL*

GREENWIT Monsieur Dapper, I dive down to your ankles.  
 JACK DAPPER Save ye, gentlemen, all three in a peculiar salute.  
 GOSHAWK He were ill to make a lawyer, he dispatches three at once. 110  
 LAXTON So, well said.—(*MISTRESS GALLIPOT gives him money secretly*) But is this of the same tobacco, Mistress Gallipot?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT The same you had at first, sir.  
 LAXTON I wish it no better: this will serve to drink at my chamber.  
 GOSHAWK Shall we taste a pipe on't?  
 LAXTON Not of this by my troth, gentlemen; I have sworn before you.  
 GOSHAWK What, not Jack Dapper? 120  
 LAXTON Pardon me, sweet Jack, I'm sorry I made such a rash oath, but foolish oaths must stand. Where art going, Jack?

90 Though . . . hands: Mulholland reads this as an aside, with 'nothing less' meaning 'anything but that', and signalling Mistress Gallipot's growing dissatisfaction with Laxton. Both this and the more literal (though perhaps ironic) reading make good sense  
 95 bear her in hand: lead her on, deceive her  
 98 chincough: whooping cough (as a result of Laxton's smoke)  
 105–6 dive . . . ankles: i.e. in a bow  
 107 peculiar: a) single; b) particular, special  
 112 is this . . . tobacco: he receives money, but pretends to be receiving only tobacco  
 115 drink: smoke

JACK DAPPER Faith, to buy one feather.  
 LAXTON (*Aside*) One feather? The fool's peculiar still.  
 JACK DAPPER Gull.  
 GULL Master?  
 JACK DAPPER Here's three halfpence for your ordinary, boy, meet me an hour hence in Paul's. 129  
 GULL (*Aside*) How? Three single halfpence? Life, this will scarce serve a man in sauce, a ha'p'orth of mustard, a ha'p'orth of oil, and a ha'p'orth of vinegar—what's left then for the pickle herring? This shows like small beer i'th'morning after a great surfeit of wine o'er night: he could spend his three pound last night in a supper amongst girls and brave bawdy-house boys: I thought his pockets cackled not for nothing: these are the eggs of three pound, I'll go sup 'em up presently. *Exit*  
 LAXTON (*Aside*) Eight, nine, ten angels: good wench i'faith, and one that loves darkness well, she puts out a candle with the best tricks of any drugster's wife in England; but that which mads her, I rail upon opportunity still, and take no notice on't. The other night she would needs lead me into a room with a candle in her hand to show me a naked picture, where no sooner entered but the candle was sent of an errand; now I not intending to understand her, but like a puny at the inns of venery, called for another light innocently: thus reward I all her cunning with simple mistaking. I know she cozens her husband to keep me, and I'll keep her honest as long as I can, to make the poor man some part of amends: an honest mind of a whoremaster!—How think you amongst you? What, a fresh pipe? Draw in a third man. 155  
 GOSHAWK No, you're a hoarder, you engross by th'ounces.

*At the feathershop now*

JACK DAPPER Puh, I like it not.

124 feather: Mulholland notes the proverbial association of fools with feathers  
 128 ordinary: an eating house serving meals for a fixed price  
 129 Paul's: i.e. St Paul's, a common meeting place for all social ranks; see *Arden of Faversham*, iii.8  
 130 ha'p'orth: halfpennyworth  
 134 small beer: weak beer  
 136 brave: handsome  
 137 cackled: 'playing on the normal cackling of a hen after laying an egg, and referring to the chinking of coins in Jack's pockets or purse—the residue of small change from his three pounds' (Mulholland)  
 140 angels: gold coins, worth about ten shillings (50 pence)  
 43–4 rail . . . still: 'i.e. always find excuses' (Mulholland)  
 148 understand: 'with a bawdy entendre on "under-stand"' (Mulholland)  
 puny: freshman  
 154 whoremaster: lecher, womaniser  
 156 engross: a) monopolise; b) grow fat

MISTRESS TILTYARD What feather is't you'd have, sir?  
 These are most worn and most in fashion 160  
 Amongst the beaver gallants, the stone riders,  
 The private stage's audience, the twelvepenny-stool  
 gentlemen:  
 I can inform you 'tis the general feather.  
 JACK DAPPER And therefore I dislike it—tell me of  
 general!  
 Now a continual Simon and Jude's rain  
 Beat all your feathers as flat down as pancakes.  
 Show me—a—spangled feather.

MISTRESS TILTYARD Oh, to go a-feasting with?  
 You'd have it for a hench-boy? You shall.

*At the sempster's shop now*

MASTER OPENWORK Mass, I had quite forgot.  
 His honour's footman was here last night, wife, 170  
 Ha' you done with my lord's shirt?

MISTRESS OPENWORK What's that to you, sir?  
 I was this morning at his honour's lodging,  
 Ere such a snail as you crept out of your shell.

MASTER OPENWORK Oh, 'twas well done, good wife.

MISTRESS OPENWORK I hold it better, sir,  
 Than if you had done't yourself.

MASTER OPENWORK Nay, so say I:  
 But is the countess's smock almost done, mouse?

MISTRESS OPENWORK Here lies the cambric, sir, but  
 wants, I fear me.

MASTER OPENWORK I'll resolve you of that presently.

MISTRESS OPENWORK Heyday! Oh audacious groom,  
 Dare you presume to noblewomen's linen? 180  
 Keep you your yard to measure shepherd's holland,  
 I must confine you, I see that.

*At the tobacco shop now*

GOSHAWK What say you to this gear?

161 beaver gallants: those who wore the fashionable and expensive beaver hats  
 stone riders: riders of stallions, with sexual entendre: 'stone' meant lascivious; 'to ride' meant to have sexual intercourse. Since 'stone' also meant testicle, Cook suggests 'stone riders' could be homosexuals  
 162 The private stage: the private theatres were more expensive, and thus more select, than public ones such as the Fortune  
 twelvepenny-stool gentlemen: the usual cost of the use of a stool at the theatre was sixpence  
 165 Simon and Jude's rain: see I.ii.205–6n  
 168 hench-boy: page  
 173 snail: eds (snake Q)  
 176 mouse: term of endearment  
 177 wants: 'i.e. wants finishing, or perhaps there isn't enough material' (Cook)  
 181 yard: measuring stick, with play on 'yard' meaning penis  
 183 gear: stuff (referring to the tobacco)

LAXTON I dare the arrantest critic in tobacco  
 To lay one fault upon't.

*Enter MOLL in a frieze jerkin and a black saveguard*

GOSHAWK Life, yonder's Moll.

LAXTON Moll, which Moll?

GOSHAWK Honest Moll.

LAXTON Prithee let's call her.—Moll.

ALL GALLANTS Moll, Moll, pist, Moll.

MOLL How now, what's the matter? 190

GOSHAWK A pipe of good tobacco, Moll.

MOLL I cannot stay.

GOSHAWK Nay Moll, puh, prithee hark, but one word  
 i'faith.

MOLL Well, what is't?

GREENWIT Prithee come hither, sirrah.

LAXTON (*Aside*) Heart, I would give but too much  
 money to be nibbling with that wench. Life, sh'as the  
 spirit of four great parishes, and a voice that will  
 drown all the city; methinks a brave captain might  
 get all his soldiers upon her, and ne'er be beholding  
 to a company of Mile End milksops, if he could  
 come on, and come off quick enough. Such a Moll  
 were a marrow-bone before an Italian, he would cry  
 bona roba till his ribs were nothing but bone. I'll lay  
 hard siege to her, money is that aquafortis that eats  
 into many a maidenhead: where the walls are flesh  
 and blood, I'll ever pierce through with a golden  
 auger. 209

GOSHAWK Now thy judgment, Moll, is't not good?

MOLL Yes faith 'tis very good tobacco; how do you sell  
 an ounce? Farewell. God b'i'you, Mistress Gallipot.

GOSHAWK Why Moll, Moll.

MOLL I cannot stay now i'faith, I am going to buy a  
 shag ruff, the shop will be shut in presently.

SD *frieze jerkin . . . saveguard*: a frieze jerkin was a short jacket of coarse woollen cloth (usually worn by men); a saveguard was an outer petticoat worn by women to protect their clothes when riding. 'Moll's dress is hermaphroditic in combining elements of the dress of both sexes' (Mulholland)

196 sirrah: often used to address women as well as men

201 get: beget

202 Mile End: the green (now Stepney Green) was used as a training ground for the city militia; their exercises were a common object of mockery

202–3 come on . . . come off: 'battle terms meaning "advance" and "retire" . . . [with] a secondary bawdy sense' (Mulholland)

204 marrow-bone: supposed to be an aphrodisiac  
 Italian: Italians had a reputation for lust and perverse sexual proclivities

205 bona roba: wench, prostitute

206–7 money . . . maidenhead: see I.ii.223–4

206 aquafortis: nitric acid; used in dilute form as a solvent

215 shag: a cloth with a velvet nap on one side, usually of worsted, sometimes of silk

GOSHAWK 'Tis the maddest fantasticallest girl—I never knew so much flesh and so much nimbleness put together.

LAXTON She slips from one company to another like a fat eel between a Dutchman's fingers. (*Aside*) I'll watch my time for her. 221

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Some will not stick to say she's a man  
And some both man and woman.

LAXTON That were excellent: she might first cuckold the husband and then make him do as much for the wife.

*The feathershop again*

MOLL Save you; how does Mistress Tiltyard?

JACK DAPPER Moll.

MOLL Jack Dapper.

JACK DAPPER How dost Moll? 230

MOLL I'll tell thee by and by, I go but to th'next shop.

JACK DAPPER Thou shalt find me here this hour about a feather.

MOLL Nay and a feather hold you in play a whole hour, a goose will last you all the days of your life.

*The sempster shop*

Let me see a good shag ruff.

MASTER OPENWORK Mistress Mary, that shalt thou i'faith, and the best in the shop. 238

MISTRESS OPENWORK How now? Greetings! Love-terms, with a pox between you! Have I found out one of your haunts? I send you for hollands, and you're i'th'low countries with a mischief. I'm served with good ware by th'shift, that makes it lie dead so long upon my hands, I were as good shut up shop, for when I open it I take nothing.

MASTER OPENWORK Nay and you fall a-ringing once,

241-5 I send . . . nothing: a passage that turns on a number of linked double entendres. 'Holland' was a linen cloth, hence the pun on 'low countries' as a) the Netherlands; b) low haunts, brothels; c) lower parts of the body, sexual organs (with, Cook suggests, play on 'cunt' in 'countries', as in *Hamlet*, III.ii.105). This wordplay echoes *2 Henry IV*, II.ii.19-20. 'Ware' meant a) goods; b) genitals (especially women's). 'Shift' meant a) trick; b) under-clothing.

Mistress Openwork is thus making two complaints at once: a) that Master Openwork uses their business as a device to attract (female) customers, with the result that her goods remain unsold and she might as well shut up shop; b) because of his sexual activities elsewhere, her own 'good ware' (next to her 'shift') is ignored, and she is left to 'shift' for herself with her own 'hands' (i.e. through the 'dead' (unsatisfactory) activity of masturbation), so that she might as well give up sexual activity altogether, since when she offers herself, nothing comes of it

246 and: if  
a-ringing: scolding

the devil cannot stop you; I'll out of the belfry as fast as I can.—Moll.

MISTRESS OPENWORK Get you from my shop.

MOLL I come to buy. 250

MISTRESS OPENWORK I'll sell ye nothing, I warn ye my house and shop.

MOLL You goody Openwork, you that prick out a poor living

And sews many a bawdy skin-coat together,  
Thou private pandress between shirt and smock,  
I wish thee for a minute but a man:  
Thou should'st never use more shapes; but as th'art,  
I pity my revenge. Now my spleen's up  
I would not mock it willingly.

*Enter a FELLOW with a long rapier by his side*

—Ha, be thankful,

Now I forgive thee. 260

MISTRESS OPENWORK Marry hang thee, I never asked forgiveness in my life.

MOLL You, goodman swine's-face.

FELLOW What, will you murder me?

MOLL You remember, slave, how you abused me t'other night in a tavern?

FELLOW Not I, by this light.

MOLL No, but by candlelight you did: you have tricks to save your oaths, reservations have you? And I have reserved somewhat for you. (*Strikes him*) As you like that, call for more; you know the sign again. 271

FELLOW Pox on't, had I brought any company along with me to have borne witness on't, 'twould ne'er have grieved me; but to be struck and nobody by, 'tis my ill fortune still. Why, tread upon a worm, they say 'twill turn tail, but indeed a gentleman should have more manners. *Exit*

LAXTON Gallantly performed i'faith Moll, and manfully! I love thee forever for't. Base rogue, had he offered but the least counter-buff, by this hand I was prepared for him. 281

MOLL You prepared for him? Why should you be prepared for him, was he any more than a man?

LAXTON No, nor so much by a yard and a handful London measure.

251 warn: deny

253 goody: goodwife

254 skin-coat: coat made of skins, but also a person's skin

255 shirt and smock: man and woman

258 spleen: temper

259 willingly: intentionally; i.e. 'if you can avoid it'

275-6 tread . . . tail: proverbial: even the humblest person will resent ill treatment

280 counter-buff: blow in return

284 yard and a handful: this was the 'London measure' (a little over a yard) used by London drapers; for sexual pun on yard, see l. 181 above and II.ii.90



MOLL Why do you speak this then? Do you think I cannot ride a stone horse unless one lead him by th'snaffle? **288**

LAXTON Yes and sit him bravely, I know thou canst Moll, 'twas but an honest mistake through love, and I'll make amends for't any way; prithee sweet plump Moll, when shall thou and I go out o'town together?

MOLL Whither? To Tyburn, prithee?

LAXTON Mass that's out o'town indeed; thou hang'st so many jests upon thy friends still. I mean honestly to Brainford, Staines, or Ware.

MOLL What to do there?

LAXTON Nothing but be merry and lie together; I'll hire a coach with four horses. **299**

MOLL I thought 'twould be a beastly journey: you may leave out one well, three horses will serve if I play the jade myself.

LAXTON Nay push, thou'rt such another kicking wench, prithee be kind and let's meet.

MOLL 'Tis hard but we shall meet, sir.

LAXTON Nay but appoint the place then, there's ten angels in fair gold, Moll, you see I do not trifle with you; do but say thou wilt meet me, and I'll have a coach ready for thee.

MOLL Why, here's my hand I'll meet you sir. **310**

LAXTON (*Aside*) Oh good gold.—The place, sweet Moll?

MOLL It shall be your appointment.

LAXTON Somewhat near Holborn, Moll.

MOLL In Gray's Inn Fields then.

LAXTON A match.

MOLL I'll meet you there.

LAXTON The hour?

MOLL Three. **318**

LAXTON That will be time enough to sup at Brainford.

*Fall from them to the other*

MASTER OPENWORK I am of such a nature, sir, I cannot endure the house when she scolds, sh'has a tongue will be heard further in a still morning than Saint Antling's bell. She rails upon me for foreign

wenching, that I being a freeman must needs keep a whore i'th'suburbs, and seek to impoverish the liberties. When we fall out, I trouble you still to make all whole with my wife.

GOSHAWK No trouble at all, 'tis a pleasure to me to join things together.

MASTER OPENWORK (*Aside*) Go thy ways, I do this but to try thy honesty, Goshawk. **331**

*The feathershop*

JACK DAPPER How lik'st thou this, Moll?

MOLL Oh singularly; you're fitted now for a bunch.

(*Aside*) He looks for all the world with those spangled feathers like a nobleman's bedpost. The purity of your wench would I fain try, she seems, like Kent, unconquered, and I believe as many wiles are in her—oh, the gallants of these times are shallow lechers, they put not their courtship home enough to a wench; 'tis impossible to know what woman is thoroughly honest, because she's ne'er thoroughly tried. I am of that certain belief there are more queans in this town of their own making than of any man's provoking: where lies the slackness then? Many a poor soul would down, and there's nobody will push 'em: **346**

Women are courted but ne'er soundly tried,  
As many walk in spurs that never ride.

*The sempster's shop*

MISTRESS OPENWORK Oh abominable.

GOSHAWK Nay more, I tell you in private, he keeps a whore i'th' suburbs. **351**

MISTRESS OPENWORK Oh spital dealing! I came to him a gentlewoman born. I'll show you mine arms when you please, sir.

GOSHAWK (*Aside*) I had rather see your legs, and begin that way.

MISTRESS OPENWORK 'Tis well known he took me from a lady's service, where I was well beloved of the

287 stone horse: a stallion, and therefore likely to be spirited; see l. 161 above; also, figuratively, meant 'man'

293 Tyburn: a place of execution

296 Brainford: a common spelling of Brentford. Brentford, Staines and Ware were villages outside London, popular for excursions and assignations; see *Epicœne*, III.ii.81

302 jade: a) worn-out horse; b) whore

313 Holborn: one of London's main thoroughfares

314 Gray's Inn Fields: open fields to the north of Gray's Inn, frequented by footpads (highwaymen who robbed on foot)

SD *Fall* . . . *other*: i.e. the focus shifts to the other group

323 Saint Antling's: St Antholin's church stood in Watling Street, east of St Paul's. It was frequented by Puritans who rang a bell for the morning lecture at 5 a.m., causing a great nuisance in the neighbourhood (Sugden)

325 suburbs: these lay outside the control of the City, and were notorious for their brothels. The 'liberties' were outside the City's bounds but within, to some extent, its control; as a freeman, Openwork's privileges would have extended there

335 nobleman's bedpost: these were frequently festooned with feathers and other hangings  
purity: chastity, sexual honour  
your wench: i.e. Mistress Tiltyard. This plot is never developed

336–7 like Kent, unconquered: a common Kentish boast  
341 thoroughly: often interchangeable with thoroughly, but with additional sense of 'through the whole substance, thickness, or extent', 'from beginning to end' (OED)

343 queans: whores

352 spital: hospital, originally for lepers, but later used for whores suffering from venereal diseases

steward, I had my Latin tongue, and a spice of the French before I came to him, and now doth he keep a suburban whore under my nostrils. 361

GOSHAWK There's ways enough to cry quit with him: hark in thine ear.

MISTRESS OPENWORK There's a friend worth a million.

MOLL (*Aside*) I'll try one spear against your chastity, Mistress Tiltyard, though it prove too short by the burr.

*Enter* RALPH TRAPDOOR

TRAPDOOR (*Aside*) Mass, here she is. I'm bound already to serve her, though it be but a sluttish trick.—Bless my hopeful young mistress with long life and great limbs, send her the upper hand of all bailiffs and their hungry adherents. 372

MOLL How now, what art thou?

TRAPDOOR A poor ebbing gentleman, that would gladly wait for the young flood of your service.

MOLL My service! What should move you to offer your service to me, sir?

TRAPDOOR The love I bear to your heroic spirit and masculine womanhood.

MOLL So sir, put case we should retain you to us, what parts are there in you for a gentlewoman's service? 381

TRAPDOOR Of two kinds, right worshipful: movable and immovable: movable to run of errands, and immovable to stand when you have occasion to use me.

MOLL What strength have you?

TRAPDOOR Strength, Mistress Moll? I have gone up into a steeple, and stayed the great bell as't has been ringing; stopped a windmill going.

MOLL And never struck down yourself? 390

TRAPDOOR Stood as upright as I do at this present.

*MOLL trips up his heels, he falls*

MOLL Come, I pardon you for this, it shall be no disgrace to you: I have struck up the heels of the high German's size ere now. What, not stand?

360 French: Mistress Openwork's attempts to impress by referring to her superior background misfire through a series of double entendres: the French were associated with perverse sexuality (as were the Italians: (see 'Latin tongue' and l. 204 above); 'French' also suggests syphilis

361 suburban: obsolete spelling, often used to refer to licentiousness of suburbs

362 cry quit with: get even with

367 burr: a broad iron ring behind the handle of a tilting lance

375 young flood: the flow of tide up-river

376–85 What . . . use: sexual quibbles throughout on 'parts', 'service', 'stand' and 'use'

380 put case: suppose

392–3 the high German: apparently a reference to a German fencer of great size and strength currently in London; see Mulholland and Cook for other references

TRAPDOOR I am of that nature where I love, I'll be at my mistress' foot to do her service.

MOLL Why, well said; but say your mistress should receive injury, have you the spirit of fighting in you, durst you second her?

TRAPDOOR Life, I have kept a bridge myself, and drove seven at a time before me. 401

MOLL Ay?

TRAPDOOR (*Aside*) But they were all Lincolnshire bullocks by my troth.

MOLL Well, meet me in Gray's Inn Fields, between three and four this afternoon, and upon better consideration we'll retain you.

TRAPDOOR I humbly thank your good mistress-ship. (*Aside*) I'll crack your neck for this kindness. *Exit*

MOLL *meets* LAXTON

LAXTON Remember three. 410

MOLL Nay if I fail you, hang me.

LAXTON Good wench i'faith.

*then* OPENWORK

MOLL Who's this?

MASTER OPENWORK 'Tis I, Moll.

MOLL Prithee tend thy shop and prevent bastards.

MASTER OPENWORK We'll have a pint of the same wine i'faith, Moll.

*Exeunt* MOLL *and* MASTER OPENWORK

*The bell rings*

GOSHAWK Hark the bell rings, come gentlemen. Jack Dapper, where shall's all munch?

JACK DAPPER I am for Parker's ordinary. 420

LAXTON He's a good guest to'm, he deserves his board, he draws all the gentlemen in a term-time thither.

We'll be your followers, Jack, lead the way.— Look you by my faith the fool has feathered his nest well.

*Exeunt* GALLANTS

*Enter* MASTER GALLIPOT, MASTER TILTYARD, *and* SERVANTS *with water-spaniels and a duck*

MASTER TILTYARD Come shut up your shops. Where's Master Openwork?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Nay ask not me, Master Tiltyard.

MASTER TILTYARD Where's his water-dog? Puh—pist—hur—hur—pist.

MASTER GALLIPOT Come wenches come, we're going all to Hogsden. 431

415 same wine: pun on 'bastard', a sweet Spanish wine

421 to'm: i.e. to him

SD *water-spaniels and a duck*: they are going duck-hunting

428–9 Puh . . . pist: presumably Tiltyard is calling and whistling for his dog

431 Hogsden: i.e. Hoxton, a popular place for excursions

MISTRESS GALLIPOT To Hogsden, husband?  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Ay, to Hogsden, pigsney.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT I'm not ready, husband.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Faith that's well—hum—pist—pist.  
 (*Spits in the dog's mouth*) Come Mistress Openwork,  
 you are so long.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK I have no joy of my life, Master  
 Gallipot. 439  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Push, let your boy lead his water-  
 spaniel along, and we'll show you the bravest sport at  
 Parlous Pond. Hey Trug, hey Trug, hey Trug, here's  
 the best duck in England, except my wife. Hey, hey,  
 hey! Fetch, fetch, fetch!  
 Come let's away:  
 Of all the year this is the sportful'st day.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene ii

*Enter SEBASTIAN solus*

SEBASTIAN If a man have a free will, where should the  
 use  
 More perfect shine than in his will to love?  
 All creatures have their liberty in that,

*Enter SIR ALEXANDER and listens to him*

Though else kept under servile yoke and fear,  
 The very bondslave has his freedom there.  
 Amongst a world of creatures voiced and silent  
 Must my desires wear fetters?—(*Aside*) Yea, are you  
 So near? Then I must break with my heart's truth,  
 Meet grief at a back way.—(*Aloud*) Well: why,  
 suppose  
 The two-leaved tongues of slander or of truth 10  
 Pronounce Moll loathsome: if before my love  
 She appear fair, what injury have I?  
 I have the thing I like: in all things else  
 Mine own eye guides me, and I find 'em prosper;  
 Life, what should ail it now? I know that man  
 Ne'er truly loves—if he gainsay't he lies—

That winks and marries with his father's eyes.  
 I'll keep mine own wide open.

*Enter MOLL and a PORTER with a viol on his back*

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Here's brave wilfulness;  
 A made match, here she comes, they met o'purpose.  
 PORTER Must I carry this great fiddle to your chamber,  
 Mistress Mary? 21  
 MOLL Fiddle, goodman hog-rubber? Some of these  
 porters bear so much for others, they have no time to  
 carry wit for themselves.  
 PORTER To your own chamber, Mistress Mary?  
 MOLL Who'll hear an ass speak? Whither else,  
 goodman pageant-bearer? They're people of the  
 worst memories. *Exit* PORTER  
 SEBASTIAN Why, 'twere too great a burthen, love, to  
 have them carry things in their minds and o'their  
 backs together. 31

MOLL Pardon me sir, I thought not you so near.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) So, so, so.  
 SEBASTIAN I would be nearer to thee, and in that fashion  
 That makes the best part of all creatures honest.  
 No otherwise I wish it. 36

MOLL Sir, I am so poor to requite you, you must look  
 for nothing but thanks of me: I have no humour to  
 marry, I love to lie o'both sides o'th'bed myself; and  
 again, o'th'other side, a wife you know ought to be  
 obedient, but I fear me I am too headstrong to obey,  
 therefore I'll ne'er go about it. I love you so well, sir,  
 for your good will I'd be loath you should repent your  
 bargain after, and therefore we'll ne'er come together  
 at first. I have the head now of myself, and am man  
 enough for a woman; marriage is but a chopping and  
 changing, where a maiden loses one head, and has a  
 worse i'th'place.

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) The most comfortablest answer  
 from a roaring girl  
 That ever mine ears drunk in.

SEBASTIAN This were enough 50

433 pigsney: darling, pet (from 'pig's eye'); Mulholland suggests a play on Hogsden  
 SD *Spits . . . mouth*: apparently an expression of affection for, and means of befriending, a dog (Mulholland)  
 442 Parlous Pond: a pool behind St Luke's Hospital, on the edge of Hoxton, used for bathing and duck-hunting. 'Parlous' is a corruption of 'perilous', so called because of the many drownings there  
 Trug: perhaps the name of the spaniel (eds)  
 SD *solus*: alone  
 10 two-leaved: eds (two leaved Q). Most eds take this to be a comparison between the tongue and the two hinged parts of a door or gate, each of which can move independently and thus speak either slander or truth (as in 'double-tongued')

17 winks: i.e. shuts his eyes, is complaisant  
 19 made match: arranged meeting  
 22 Fiddle: perhaps with sexual quibble; see II.i.68  
 hog-rubber: term of abuse  
 22-4 Some of . . . themselves: Mulholland notes a tradition that porters were considered weak-witted  
 27 pageant-bearer: a pageant was originally a portable stage, set up in the street for the acting of plays or municipal shows  
 34-5 fashion . . . honest: i.e. in marriage  
 35 best part: most  
 38 humour: disposition  
 40 again . . . side: besides, on the other hand  
 45 at first: in the first place  
 47-8 loses . . . place: 'i.e. exchanges a maidenhead for a head of household' (Mulholland)

Now to affright a fool forever from thee,  
 When 'tis the music that I love thee for.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) There's a boy spoils all again.  
 MOLL Believe it, sir, I am not of that disdainful temper,  
 but I could love you faithfully.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) A pox on you for that word. I  
 like you not now;  
 Y'are a cunning roarer, I see that already. 57  
 MOLL But sleep upon this once more, sir, you may  
 chance shift a mind tomorrow: be not too hasty to  
 wrong yourself. Never while you live, sir, take a wife  
 running, many have run out at heels that have done't.  
 You see, sir, I speak against myself, and if every  
 woman would deal with their suitor so honestly, poor  
 younger brothers would not be so often gulled with  
 old cozening widows, that turn o'er all their wealth in  
 trust to some kinsman, and make the poor gentleman  
 work hard for a pension. Fare you well sir. 67  
 SEBASTIAN Nay prithee one word more.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) How do I wrong this girl, she  
 puts him off still.  
 MOLL Think upon this in cold blood, sir; you make as  
 much haste as if you were a-going upon a sturgeon  
 voyage; take deliberation, sir, never choose a wife as if  
 you were going to Virginia. 73  
 SEBASTIAN And so we parted, my too cursed fate.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) She is but cunning, gives him  
 longer time in't.

*Enter a TAILOR*

TAILOR Mistress Moll, Mistress Moll: so ho ho, so ho.  
 MOLL There boy, there boy. What, dost thou go a-  
 hawking after me with a red clout on thy finger?  
 TAILOR I forgot to take measure on you for your new  
 breeches. 80  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Heyday, breeches? What, will  
 he marry a monster with two trinkets? What age is  
 this? If the wife go in breeches, the man must wear  
 long coats like a fool.

64 younger brothers: i.e. with little or no inheritance  
 65–6 widows . . . kinsman: because a widow's wealth passed to  
 her husband if she remarried, cautious ones sometimes  
 placed it in the hands of a relative in order to prevent this  
 happening; see *Epicoene*, II.ii.153–6  
 71–2 sturgeon voyage: obscure; OED suggests a fishing voy-  
 age for sturgeon. 'The point here, and in what follows,  
 seems to be: don't choose a wife as if you were going to  
 be away from home and would never have to live with  
 her, or as if you were going to a barbaric country [Virgia-  
 nia] where any female will do' (quoted in Mulholland)  
 76 so . . . ho: a falconer's cry, hence Moll's reference in the  
 next speech  
 78 clout: strip of cloth, used for measuring or as a pin-cushion  
 82 two trinkets: given the preceding reference to 'monster',  
 'possibly signifying the sexual organs of both sexes'  
 (Mulholland)

MOLL What fiddling's here? Would not the old pattern  
 have served your turn?  
 TAILOR You change the fashion, you say you'll have the  
 great Dutch slop, Mistress Mary.  
 MOLL Why sir, I say so still.  
 TAILOR Your breeches then will take up a yard more. 90  
 MOLL Well, pray look it be put in then.  
 TAILOR It shall stand round and full, I warrant you.  
 MOLL Pray make 'em easy enough.  
 TAILOR I know my fault now, t'other was somewhat  
 stiff between the legs; I'll make these open enough, I  
 warrant you.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Here's good gear towards! I  
 have brought up my son to marry a Dutch slop and a  
 French doublet, a codpiece-daughter.  
 TAILOR So, I have gone as far as I can go. 100  
 MOLL Why then, farewell.  
 TAILOR If you go presently to your chamber, Mistress  
 Mary, pray send me the measure of your thigh by  
 some honest body.  
 MOLL Well, sir, I'll send it by a porter presently. *Exit*  
 TAILOR So you had need, it is a lusty one, both of them  
 would make any porter's back ache in England. *Exit*  
 SEBASTIAN I have examined the best part of man,  
 Reason and judgment, and in love, they tell me,  
 They leave me uncontrolled: he that is swayed 110  
 By an unfeeling blood past heat of love,  
 His springtime must needs err: his watch ne'er goes  
 right  
 That sets his dial by a rusty clock.  
 SIR ALEXANDER So, and which is that rusty clock, sir,  
 you?  
 SEBASTIAN The clock at Ludgate, sir, it ne'er goes true.  
 SIR ALEXANDER But thou goest falser: not thy father's  
 cares  
 Can keep thee right, when that insensible work  
 Obeys the workman's art, lets off the hour  
 And stops again when time is satisfied;

85 fiddling: fidgeting, with sexual innuendo; see II.i.68  
 88 great Dutch slop: wide, baggy breeches, newly  
 fashionable; see *Epicoene*, IV.v.120n  
 90 yard: this, and the tailor's speeches that follow, turn on a  
 pun on 'yard' meaning penis  
 97 gear: a) business; b) clothing; c) genitals  
 towards: at hand (Bullen)  
 106 a lusty one: 'thighs are an obvious incitement to sexual  
 adventure' (Cook); see *Romeo and Juliet*, II.i.19–20, and  
*Duchess of Malfi*, II.v.42  
 112 springtime: allusion to both youth and timekeeping (of  
 the watch/clock). The speech is a warning that the young  
 should not be controlled by the old or by those of  
 'unfeeling blood', or else they 'must needs err'  
 117 insensible work: i.e. the clock (which obeys the  
 'workman's art', unlike Sebastian, whose 'father's cares'  
 cannot keep him 'right')

But thou run'st on, and judgment, thy main wheel,  
Beats by all stops, as if the work would break, **121**  
Begun with long pains for a minute's ruin:  
Much like a suffering man brought up with care,  
At last bequeathed to shame and a short prayer.

SEBASTIAN I taste you bitterer than I can deserve, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER Who has bewitched thee, son? What  
devil or drug

Hath wrought upon the weakness of thy blood,  
And betrayed all her hopes to ruinous folly?  
Oh wake from drowsy and enchanted shame,  
Wherein thy soul sits with a golden dream **130**  
Flattered and poisoned. I am old, my son,  
Oh let me prevail quickly,  
For I have weightier business of mine own  
Than to chide thee: I must not to my grave  
As a drunkard to his bed, whereon he lies  
Only to sleep, and never cares to rise.

Let me dispatch in time; come no more near her.

SEBASTIAN Not honestly? Not in the way of marriage?

SIR ALEXANDER What sayst thou? Marriage? In what  
place? The sessions house? And who shall give the  
bride, prithee? An indictment? **141**

SEBASTIAN Sir, now ye take part with the world to  
wrong her.

SIR ALEXANDER Why, wouldst thou fain marry to be  
pointed at?

Alas the number's great, do not o'erburden't:  
Why, as good marry a beacon on a hill,  
Which all the country fix their eyes upon,  
As her thy folly doats on. If thou long'st  
To have the story of thy infamous fortunes  
Serve for discourse in ordinaries and taverns,  
Thou'rt in the way; or to confound thy name, **150**  
Keep on, thou canst not miss it; or to strike  
Thy wretched father to untimely coldness,  
Keep the left hand still, it will bring thee to't.  
Yet if no tears wrung from thy father's eyes,  
Nor sighs that fly in sparkles from his sorrows,  
Had power to alter what is wilful in thee,  
Methinks her very name should fright thee from her,  
And never trouble me.

SEBASTIAN Why is the name of Moll so fatal, sir?

SIR ALEXANDER Many one, sir, where suspect is  
entered, **160**

120 judgment: see l. 109; his judgment is here misled by love  
121-2 Beats by . . . ruin: 'threatens to wreck speedily the whole  
work . . . Begun (i.e. created or made) "with long pains"  
by "the workman's art" (i.e. "thy father's cares", l. 116)  
(Mulholland)

131 Flattered: encouraged with false hopes

140 sessions house: court house

153 Keep . . . still: keep to the sinister way always

160 Many one: many a one (presumably constables)  
suspect: suspicion

Forseek all London from one end to t'other  
More whores of that name than of any ten other.

SEBASTIAN What's that to her? Let those blush for  
themselves.

Can any guilt in others condemn her?

I've vowed to love her: let all storms oppose me

That ever beat against the breast of man,

Nothing but death's black tempest shall divide us.

SIR ALEXANDER Oh folly that can doat on nought but  
shame!

SEBASTIAN Put case a wanton itch runs through one  
name

More than another: is that name the worse, **170**

Where honesty sits possessed in't? It should rather

Appear more excellent, and deserve more praise,

When through foul mists a brightness it can raise.

Why, there are of the devil's, honest gentlemen,

And well descended, keep an open house,

And some o'th'good man's that are arrant knaves.

He hates unworthily that by rote contemns,

For the name neither saves, nor yet condemns;

And for her honesty, I have made such proof on't,

In several forms, so nearly watched her ways, **180**

I will maintain that strict against an army,

Excepting you my father. Here's her worst,

Sh'has a bold spirit that mingles with mankind,

But nothing else comes near it: and oftentimes

Through her apparel somewhat shames her birth;

But she is loose in nothing but in mirth:

Would all Molls were no worse.

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) This way I toil in vain and give  
but aim

To infamy and ruin: he will fall,

My blessing cannot stay him: all my joys **190**

Stand at the brink of a devouring flood

And will be wilfully swallowed, wilfully.

But why so vain let all these tears be lost?

I'll pursue her to shame, and so all's crossed. *Exit*

SEBASTIAN He is gone with some strange purpose,  
whose effect

Will hurt me little if he shoot so wide,

To think I love so blindly: I but feed

His heart to this match, to draw on th'other,

Wherein my joy sits with a full wish crowned,

161 Forseek: seek thoroughly

169 Put case: suppose

174 of the devil's: 'among those who appear to be of the  
devil's party' (Cook)

176 o'th'good man's: i.e. those apparently of God's party  
(from proverb 'God is a good man')

179 for: as for

184 But . . . it: 'but nothing besides her spirit comes near  
mankind' (Mulholland)

188 give but aim: an archery term: 'give one's aim by signalling  
the result of a previous shot' (quoted in Mulholland)

Only his mood excepted, which must change  
 By opposite policies, courses indirect:  
 Plain dealing in this world takes no effect.  
 This mad girl I'll acquaint with my intent,  
 Get her assistance, make my fortunes known:  
 'Twixt lovers' hearts she's a fit instrument,  
 And has the art to help them to their own:  
 By her advice, for in that craft she's wise,  
 My love and I may meet, spite of all spies.

### Act III, scene i

*Enter LAXTON in Gray's Inn Fields with the COACHMAN*

LAXTON Coachman.

COACHMAN Here sir.

LAXTON There's a tester more; prithee drive thy coach  
 to the hither end of Marybone Park, a fit place for  
 Moll to get in.

COACHMAN Marybone Park, sir.

LAXTON Ay, it's in our way, thou knowest.

COACHMAN It shall be done, sir.

LAXTON Coachman.

COACHMAN Anon, sir.

LAXTON Are we fitted with good frampold jades?

COACHMAN The best in Smithfield, I warrant you, sir.

LAXTON May we safely take the upper hand of any  
 coached velvet cap or tufttaffety jacket? For they keep  
 a vild swaggering in coaches nowadays, the highways  
 are stopped with them.

COACHMAN My life for yours, and baffle 'em too sir:  
 why, they are the same jades, believe it, sir, that have  
 drawn all your famous whores to Ware.

LAXTON Nay, then they know their business; they need  
 no more instructions.

200 COACHMAN They're so used to such journeys, sir, I  
 never use whip to 'em; for if they catch but the scent  
 of a wench once, they run like devils.

*Exit COACHMAN with his whip*

LAXTON Fine Cerberus! That rogue will have the start  
 of a thousand ones, for whilst others trot afoot, he'll  
 ride prancing to hell upon a coach-horse.—Stay, 'tis  
 now about the hour of her appointment, but yet I see  
 her not. (*The clock strikes three*) Hark what's this?

*Exit*  
 One, two, three, three by the clock at Savoy: this is  
 the hour, and Gray's Inn Fields the place, she swore  
 she'd meet me. Ha, yonder's two Inns o' Court men  
 with one wench, but that's not she, they walk toward  
 Islington out of my way. I see none yet dressed like  
 her; I must look for a shag ruff, a frieze jerkin, a short  
 sword, and a saveguard, or I get none. Why, Moll,  
 prithee make haste, or the coachman will curse us  
 anon.

38

*Enter MOLL like a man*

MOLL (*Aside*) Oh here's my gentleman: if they would  
 keep their days as well with their mercers as their  
 hours with their harlots, no bankrupt would give  
 seven score pound for a sergeant's place; for would  
 you know a catchpole rightly derived, the corruption  
 of a citizen is the generation of a sergeant. How his  
 eye hawks for venery!—Come, you are ready sir?

LAXTON Ready? For what, sir?

MOLL Do you ask that now, sir? Why was this meeting  
 'pointed?

LAXTON I thought you mistook me sir.

You seem to be some young barrister;

I have no suit in law—all my land's sold,

I praise heaven for't; 't has rid me of much trouble.

MOLL Then I must wake you, sir; where stands the  
 coach?

LAXTON Who's this? Moll, honest Moll?

MOLL So young, and purblind? You're an old wanton  
 in your eyes, I see that.

50

3 tester: sixpence (from the teston of Henry VIII, a small  
 coin originally worth a shilling)

4 Marybone Park: i.e. Marylebone Park, now part of  
 Regent's Park, at this time a centre for prostitution.  
 'Marybone' is punning on 'marrow-bone' (see II.i.204n).  
 Cook suggests an additional pun on 'park' as 'the female  
 body as a domain where the lover may freely roam'

11 frampold: spirited

jades: horses (contemptuous term), nags; see II.i.302

12 Smithfield: a horse and cattle market with a bad  
 reputation

14 coached: couched, embroidered with gold thread

tufttaffety: taffeta with a tufted nap or pile

15 vild: vile

nowadays: 'since the repeal of sumptuary law in 1603  
 which allowed the newly-wealthy middle classes to dress  
 more finely than before. These people also need coaches  
 – hitherto luxury items – creating traffic jams' (Cook)

17 baffle: disgrace; see I.ii.168

19 Ware: see II.i.296n

25 Cerberus: three-headed dog, guardian of the entrance to  
 the underworld

30 Savoy: a hospital, located between the Strand and the  
 river, built by Henry VII on the site of the Savoy Palace

34 Islington: suburb to the north of London; a popular place  
 for excursions and rendez-vous

36 saveguard: see II.i.185 sdn

sdn *like a man*: i.e. dressed as a man

40 mercers: dealers in fine fabrics

41–2 bankrupt . . . sergeant: Mulholland identifies this as  
 proverbial: 'A sergeant is the spawn of some decayed  
 shop-keeper'

43 catchpole: sheriff's officer; sergeant who arrests for debt  
 corruption: degeneration

51 all . . . sold: another instance of Laxton's 'lack'

56 purblind: totally blind

LAXTON Th'art admirably suited for the Three Pigeons at Brainford. I'll swear I knew thee not.

MOLL I'll swear you did not: but you shall know me now. 61

LAXTON No, not here, we shall be spied i'faith; the coach is better, come.

MOLL Stay.

LAXTON What, wilt thou untruss a point, Moll?

*She puts off her cloak and draws her sword*

MOLL Yes, here's the point

That I untruss: 't has but one tag, 'twill serve, though, To tie up a rogue's tongue.

LAXTON How?

MOLL There's the gold  
With which you hired your hackney, here's her pace,  
She racks hard, and perhaps your bones will feel it:  
Ten angels of mine own I've put to thine: 70  
Win 'em and wear 'em.

LAXTON Hold Moll, Mistress Mary.

MOLL Draw, or I'll serve an execution on thee  
Shall lay thee up till doomsday.

LAXTON Draw upon a woman? Why, what dost mean, Moll?

MOLL To teach thy base thoughts manners: thou'rt one of those

That thinks each woman thy fond flexible whore;  
If she but cast a liberal eye upon thee,  
Turn back her head, she's thine; or, amongst  
company,

By chance drink first to thee, then she's quite gone,  
There's no means to help her: nay for a need, 80  
Wilt swear unto thy credulous fellow lechers  
That thou'rt more in favour with a lady

At first sight than her monkey all her lifetime.  
How many of our sex by such as thou

58 Three Pigeons: a famous inn at Brentford

62 No, not here: Laxton takes Moll's words to be the prelude to a sexual encounter

65 point: lace that attached hose to doublet. Moll uses the word to refer to the point of her sword

68 hackney: a) horse for hire; b) prostitute  
pace: a) rate, speed; b) gait (of horse)

69 racks: moves with gait known as a 'rack', whereby the fore and hind legs move together on one side and then the other; at speed, a very rough pace

71 Win . . . wear 'em: proverbial

72 Draw . . . execution: to serve an execution is make formal delivery of a process or writ. Cook also notes that 'draw' meant to expose the penis ('as a sword from a scabbard'), and an 'execution' was the performance of a sexual act; 'her threat therefore is that she will geld him'

76 fond: foolish

flexible: impressionable, tractable

77 liberal: a) generous; b) licentious

80 for a need: in an emergency, at a pinch

83 monkey: monkeys were popular as pets

Have their good thoughts paid with a blasted name  
That never deserved loosely or did trip

In path of whoredom beyond cup and lip?

But for the stain of conscience and of soul,

Better had women fall into the hands

Of an act silent than a bragging nothing; 90

There's no mercy in't.—What durst move you, sir,

To think me whorish?—A name which I'd tear out

From the high German's throat if it lay ledger there

To dispatch privy slanders against me.

In thee I defy all men, their worst hates,

And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts,

With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools.

Distressed needlewomen and trade-fallen wives,

Fish that must needs bite or themselves be bitten,

Such hungry things as these may soon be took 100

With a worm fastened on a golden hook:

Those are the lecher's food, his prey; he watches

For quarrelling wedlocks, and poor shifting sisters,

'Tis the best fish he takes. But why, good fisherman,

Am I thought meat for you, that never yet

Had angling rod cast towards me? 'Cause, you'll say,

I'm given to sport, I'm often merry, jest:

Had mirth no kindred in the world but lust?

Oh shame take all her friends then: but howe'er

Thou and the baser world censure my life, 110

I'll send 'em word by thee, and write so much

Upon thy breast, 'cause thou shalt bear't in mind:

Tell them 'twere base to yield, where I have conquered.

I scorn to prostitute myself to a man,

I that can prostitute a man to me;

And so I greet thee.

LAXTON Hear me.

MOLL Would the spirits

Of all my slanderers were clasped in thine,

That I might vex an army at one time.

LAXTON I do repent me, hold. *They fight*

MOLL You'll die the better Christian then. 120

LAXTON I do confess I have wronged thee, Moll.

MOLL Confession is but poor amends for wrong,

Unless a rope would follow.

LAXTON I ask thee pardon.

87 beyond cup and lip: 'the allusion is to a betrothal' (Mulholland)

88 But for: were it not for

90 act: i.e. a sexual act

93 high German's throat: see II.i.392-3n

lay ledger: resided

98 needlewomen: see I.i.53n

99 Fish: commonly meant 'prostitute' (eds)

101 worm . . . hook: proverbial

103 wedlocks: wives; or, perhaps, 'marriages'

shifting: deceitful

112 'cause: so that

116 greet: assail

MOLL I'm your hired whore, sir.  
 LAXTON I yield both purse and body.  
 MOLL Both are mine,  
 And now at my disposing.  
 LAXTON Spare my life.  
 MOLL I scorn to strike thee basely. **127**  
 LAXTON Spoke like a noble girl, i'faith. (*Aside*) Heart, I  
 think I fight with a familiar, or the ghost of a fencer.  
 Sh'has wounded me gallantly. Call you this a  
 lecherous voyage? Here's blood would have served me  
 this seven year in broken heads and cut fingers, and it  
 now runs all out together. Pox o'the Three Pigeons, I  
 would the coach were here now to carry me to the  
 chirurgeons. *Exit*  
 MOLL If I could meet my enemies one by one thus,  
 I might make pretty shift with 'em in time,  
 And make 'em know, she that has wit and spirit  
 May scorn to live beholding to her body for meat,  
 Or for apparel, like your common dame **140**  
 That makes shame get her clothes to cover shame.  
 Base is that mind that kneels unto her body,  
 As if a husband stood in awe on's wife;  
 My spirit shall be mistress of this house,  
 As long as I have time in't.—Oh,

*Enter* TRAPDOOR

Here comes my man that would be: 'tis his hour.  
 Faith, a good well-set fellow, if his spirit  
 Be answerable to his umbles; he walks stiff,  
 But whether he will stand to't stiffly, there's the  
 point;  
 Has a good calf for't, and ye shall have many a  
 woman **150**  
 Choose him she means to make her head by his calf;  
 I do not know their tricks in't. Faith, he seems  
 A man without; I'll try what he is within.  
 TRAPDOOR She told me Gray's Inn Fields 'twixt three  
 and four.  
 I'll fit her mistress-ship with a piece of service:  
 I'm hired to rid the town of one mad girl. *She jostles him*  
 What a pox ails you, sir?  
 MOLL He begins like a gentleman.  
 TRAPDOOR Heart, is the field so narrow, or your  
 eyesight?  
 Life, he comes back again. *She comes towards him*

129 familiar: spirit  
 131 voyage: eds (viage Q); 'sexual adventure' (Mulholland)  
 135 chirurgeons: surgeons  
 140 common dame: whore  
 146 man: servant  
 148 answerable . . . umbles: consistent with his insides  
 ('umbles' meant the edible inward parts of an animal,  
 usually a deer)  
 stiff: resolutely (with innuendo)  
 152 tricks: skills

MOLL Was this spoke to me, sir? **161**  
 TRAPDOOR I cannot tell, sir.  
 MOLL Go, y'are a coxcomb.  
 TRAPDOOR Coxcomb?  
 MOLL Y'are a slave.  
 TRAPDOOR I hope there's law for you, sir.  
 MOLL Yea, do you see, sir? *Turns his hat*  
 TRAPDOOR Heart, this is no good dealing; pray let me  
 know what house you're of.  
 MOLL One of the Temple, sir. *Fillips him*  
 TRAPDOOR Mass, so methinks. **171**  
 MOLL And yet sometime I lie about Chick Lane.  
 TRAPDOOR I like you the worse because you shift your  
 lodging so often; I'll not meddle with you for that  
 trick, sir.  
 MOLL A good shift, but it shall not serve your turn.  
 TRAPDOOR You'll give me leave to pass about my  
 business, sir.  
 MOLL Your business? I'll make you wait on me before I  
 ha' done, and glad to serve me too. **180**  
 TRAPDOOR How sir? Serve you? Not if there were no  
 more men in England.  
 MOLL But if there were no more women in England, I  
 hope you'd wait upon your mistress then.  
 TRAPDOOR Mistress!  
 MOLL Oh you're a tried spirit at a push, sir.  
 TRAPDOOR What would your worship have me do?  
 MOLL You a fighter?  
 TRAPDOOR No, I praise heaven, I had better grace and  
 more manners. **190**  
 MOLL As how, I pray, sir?  
 TRAPDOOR Life, 't had been a beastly part of me to  
 have drawn my weapons upon my mistress; all the  
 world would'a' cried shame of me for that.  
 MOLL Why, but you knew me not.  
 TRAPDOOR Do not say so, mistress. I knew you by your  
 wide straddle, as well as if I had been in your belly.  
 MOLL Well, we shall try you further, i'th'meantime we  
 give you entertainment.  
 TRAPDOOR Thank your good mistress-ship. **200**  
 MOLL How many suits have you?  
 TRAPDOOR No more suits than backs, mistress.  
 MOLL Well, if you deserve, I cast off this next week,  
 And you may creep into't.

170 One . . . Temple: i.e. a lawyer (the Middle and Inner  
 Temples are Inns of Court)  
 SD *Fillips*: flicks with her finger  
 172 Chick Lane: in the district of Smithfield, and notorious  
 for its thieves  
 175 trick: habit, practice  
 186 at a push: in an emergency; Mulholland speculates on  
 bawdy innuendo ('push' meant copulate)  
 193 drawn my weapons: with innuendo; see l. 72n  
 199 give you entertainment: engage you  
 203 this: i.e. this suit



TRAPDOOR Thank your good worship.

MOLL Come follow me to St Thomas Apostle's,  
I'll put a livery cloak upon your back  
The first thing I do.

TRAPDOOR I follow my dear mistress.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene ii

*Enter MISTRESS GALLIPIOT as from supper, her husband after her*

MASTER GALLIPOT What Pru, nay sweet Prudence.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT What a pruing keep you! I think the baby would have a teat it kyes so. Pray be not so fond of me, leave your city humours; I'm vexed at you to see how like a calf you come bleating after me.

MASTER GALLIPOT Nay, honey Pru: how does your rising up before all the table show? And flinging from my friends so uncivilly? Fie Pru, fie, come.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Then up and ride, i'faith. 9

MASTER GALLIPOT Up and ride? Nay, my pretty Pru, that's far from my thought, duck: why, mouse, thy mind is nibbling at something; what is't? What lies upon thy stomach?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Such an ass as you: heyday, y'are best turn midwife, or physician: y'are a pothecary already, but I'm none of your drugs.

MASTER GALLIPOT Thou art a sweet drug, sweetest Pru, and the more thou art pounded, the more precious. 19

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Must you be prying into a woman's secrets: say ye?

MASTER GALLIPOT Woman's secrets?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT What? I cannot have a qualm come upon me but your teeth waters till your nose hang over it.

MASTER GALLIPOT It is my love, dear wife.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Your love? Your love is all words; give me deeds! I cannot abide a man that's too fond over me, so cookish; thou dost not know how to handle a woman in her kind. 30

MASTER GALLIPOT No, Pru? Why, I hope I have handled—

205 St Thomas Apostle's: a church east of St Paul's and Bow Lane, near Garlick Hill and what is now Queen Street.

There were clothiers' shops in the neighbourhood

2 pruing: a nonce-word, from 'Prudence'

3 kyes: i.e. cries (baby-talk)

4 humours: moods

9 up and ride: obscene riposte; 'ride' meant sexual intercourse

16 drugs: with play on 'drudges'

24 teeth waters: variant of 'mouth waters'

29 cookish: like a cook

30 in her kind: as she deserves

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Handle a fool's head of your own—fie—fie.

MASTER GALLIPOT Ha, ha, 'tis such a wasp; it does me good now to have her sting me, little rogue.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Now fie how you vex me! I cannot abide these apron husbands: such cotqueans! You overdo your things, they become you scurvily. 39

MASTER GALLIPOT (*Aside*) Upon my life she breeds.

Heaven knows how I have strained myself to please her, night and day. I wonder why we citizens should get children so fretful and untoward in the breeding, their fathers being for the most part as gentle as milch kine.—Shall I leave thee, my Pru?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Fie, fie, fie. 46

MASTER GALLIPOT Thou shalt not be vexed no more, pretty kind rogue, take no cold, sweet Pru. *Exit*

MISTRESS GALLIPOT As your wit has done. Now Master Laxton, show your head; what news from you? Would any husband suspect that a woman crying 'Buy any scurvy-grass' should bring love letters amongst her herbs to his wife? Pretty trick, fine conveyance: had jealousy a thousand eyes, a silly woman with scurvy-grass blinds them all; Laxton, with bays

Crown I thy wit for this, it deserves praise.

This makes me affect thee more, this proves thee wise, 'Lack, what poor shift is love forced to devise!— 59 To th' point. *She reads the letter*

'Oh sweet creature—' (a sweet beginning) 'pardon my long absence, for thou shalt shortly be possessed with my presence; though Demophon was false to Phyllis, I will be to thee as Pan-da-rus was to Cres-sida: though Aeneas made an ass of Dido, I will die to

36 sting: eds (sing Q); arouse sexually (Cook)

38 apron husbands: husbands who follow their wives as if tied to their apron strings (eds)

cotqueans: used of men who act the housewife and meddle with female affairs (eds)

things: a) attentions; b) sexual organs (Mulholland)

39 scurvily: meanly

43 get: beget

untoward: unruly

52 scurvy-grass: spoonwort (*cochlearia officinalis*), used in anti-scorbutic preparations

63 Demophon . . . Phyllis: Demophon, son of Theseus, failed to return to Phyllis, princess of Thrace, at the time appointed; she hanged herself, and was turned into an almond tree, which burst into flower when Demophon returned and embraced it

64 Pan-da-rus . . . Cres-sida: thus in Q<sub>2</sub>, 'to mark the difficulty with which such hard names were read by Mistress Gallipot' (eds). Pandarus was the go-between in the relationship of Troilus and Cressida

65 Aeneas . . . Dido: when Aeneas left Carthage by order of the gods, Dido, whose love for him was unrequited, killed herself

thee ere I do so. Oh sweetest creature, make much of me, for no man beneath the silver moon shall make more of a woman than I do of thee: furnish me therefore with thirty pounds; you must do it of necessity for me; I languish till I see some comfort come from thee. Protesting not to die in thy debt, but rather to live so, as hitherto I have and will, 72  
Thy true Laxton ever'.

Alas poor gentleman, troth I pity him.  
How shall I raise this money? Thirty pound?  
'Tis thirty sure, a 3 before an o,  
I know his threes too well. My childbed linen?  
Shall I pawn that for him? Then if my mark  
Be known I am undone; it may be thought  
My husband's bankrupt. Which way shall I turn? 80  
Laxton, what with my own fears, and thy wants,  
I'm like a needle 'twixt two adamant.

Enter MASTER GALLIPOT *hastily*

MASTER GALLIPOT Nay, nay, wife, the women are all up. (*Aside*) Ha, how, reading o' letters? I smell a goose, a couple of capons, and a gammon of bacon from her mother out of the country, I hold my life.— Steal, steal—

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh beshrew your heart.  
MASTER GALLIPOT What letter's that?  
I'll see't. *She tears the letter*

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh would thou hadst no eyes to see  
The downfall of me and thyself: I'm forever,  
Forever I'm undone.

MASTER GALLIPOT What ails my Pru? 90  
What paper's that thou tear'st?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Would I could tear  
My very heart in pieces: for my soul  
Lies on the rack of shame, that tortures me  
Beyond a woman's suffering.

MASTER GALLIPOT What means this?  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Had you no other vengeance to throw down,  
But even in height of all my joys—

MASTER GALLIPOT Dear woman—  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT When the full sea of pleasure and content  
Seemed to flow over me?

MASTER GALLIPOT As thou desirest  
To keep me out of bedlam, tell what troubles thee,

65-5 die to thee: with pun on sense of 'have an orgasm'  
76 a 3 before an o: eds suggest a sexual entendre: 'o' meant vagina; 3 may allude to 're' (Latin for 'thing', meaning penis), or to penis and testicles (i.e. 'three' parts)  
78 mark: laundry mark, for identification  
82 adamant: loadstones or magnets  
87 Steal, steal: Gallipot is stealing up behind his wife  
99 bedlam: Bethlehem hospital for the insane

Is not thy child at nurse fallen sick, or dead? 100  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh no.

MASTER GALLIPOT Heavens bless me, are my barns and houses  
Yonder at Hockley Hole consumed with fire?  
I can build more, sweet Pru.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT 'Tis worse, 'tis worse.  
MASTER GALLIPOT My factor broke? Or is the Jonas sunk?  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Would all we had were swallowed

in the waves,  
Rather than both should be the scorn of slaves.  
MASTER GALLIPOT I'm at my wif's end.  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh my dear husband,  
Where once I thought myself a fixed star,  
Placed only in the heaven of thine arms,  
I fear now I shall prove a wanderer. 110  
Oh Laxton, Laxton, is it then my fate  
To be by thee o'erthrown?

MASTER GALLIPOT Defend me, wisdom,  
From falling into frenzy. On my knees,  
Sweet Pru, speak what's that Laxton who so heavy  
Lies on thy bosom?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT I shall sure run mad.  
MASTER GALLIPOT I shall run mad for company then.

Speak to me,  
I'm Gallipot thy husband—Pru,—why Pru,  
Art sick in conscience for some villainous deed  
Thou wert about to act? Didst mean to rob me?  
Tush, I forgive thee; hast thou on my bed 120  
Thrust my soft pillow under another's head?  
I'll wink at all faults, Pru; 'las, that's no more  
Than what some neighbours near thee have done  
before.

Sweet honey Pru, what's that Laxton?  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh.  
MASTER GALLIPOT Out with him.  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh he's born to be  
my undoer.

This hand which thou call'st thine, to him was given,  
To him was I made sure i'th'sight of heaven.  
MASTER GALLIPOT I never heard this thunder.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Yes, yes, before  
I was to thee contracted, to him I swore: 129  
Since last I saw him, twelve months three times told  
The moon hath drawn through her light silver bow;

100 at nurse: lodged with wet-nurse away from home

102 Hockley Hole: Hockley-in-the-Hole, near Clerkenwell Green

104 My factor broke: my agent absconded (or bankrupt)

108 fixed star: star which always appears in the same place in the sky, as opposed to a 'wanderer' (l. 110)

127 made sure: contracted, betrothed; see I.i.76-7

130-1 twelve . . . bow: similar to phrasing in others of Dekker's plays; see *The Whore of Babylon*, I.i.47, IV.ii.2-4; and *The Honest Whore*, part 2, V.ii.25-6 (eds)

For o'er the seas he went, and it was said  
 (But rumour lies) that he in France was dead.  
 But he's alive, oh he's alive, he sent  
 That letter to me, which in rage I rent,  
 Swearing with oaths most damnably to have me,  
 Or tear me from this bosom: oh heavens save me.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT My heart will break—shamed and  
 undone forever.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT So black a day, poor wretch, went  
 o'er thee never.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT If thou should'st wrestle with him  
 at the law, 140  
 Th'art sure to fall; no odd sleight, no prevention.  
 I'll tell him th'art with child.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Hm.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Or give out  
 One of my men was ta'en abed with thee.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Hm, hm.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Before I lose thee, my  
 dear Pru,  
 I'll drive it to that push.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Worse, and worse still,  
 You embrace a mischief, to prevent an ill.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT I'll buy thee of him, stop his mouth  
 with gold,  
 Think'st thou 'twill do?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh me, heavens grant it would!  
 Yet now my senses are set more in tune,  
 He writ, as I remember in his letter, 150  
 That he in riding up and down had spent,  
 Ere he could find me, thirty pounds. Send that,  
 Stand not on thirty with him.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Forty, Pru,  
 Say thou the word, 'tis done: we venture lives  
 For wealth, but must do more to keep our wives:  
 Thirty or forty, Pru?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Thirty, good sweet;  
 Of an ill bargain let's save what we can;  
 I'll pay it him with my tears; he was a man  
 When first I knew him of a meek spirit:  
 All goodness is not yet dried up, I hope. 160  
 MASTER GALLIPOT He shall have thirty pound, let that  
 stop all:  
 Love's sweets taste best, when we have drunk down  
 gall.

*Enter* MASTER TILTYARD *and his* WIFE, MASTER  
 GOSHAWK, *and* MISTRESS OPENWORK

141 odd sleight: cunning device (to outwit Laxton)  
 145 to that push: a) to that extremity; b) sexual sense (see  
 III.i.186n)  
 153 Stand not on: do not scruple at  
 154-5 we venture . . . wives: proverbial

God-so, our friends; come, come, smooth your  
 cheek;  
 After a storm the face of heaven looks sleek.  
 MASTER TILTYARD Did I not tell you these turtles were  
 together?  
 MISTRESS TILTYARD How dost thou, sirrah? Why,  
 sister Gallipot!  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Lord, how she's changed!  
 GOSHAWK Is your wife ill, sir? 170  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Yes indeed, la sir, very ill, very ill,  
 never worse.  
 MISTRESS TILTYARD How her head burns; feel how her  
 pulses work.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Sister, lie down a little, that  
 always does me good.  
 MISTRESS TILTYARD In good sadness, I find best ease  
 in that too; has she laid some hot thing to her  
 stomach? 179  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT No, but I will lay something anon.  
 MASTER TILTYARD Come, come fools, you trouble her.  
 Shall's go, Master Goshawk?  
 GOSHAWK Yes, sweet Master Tiltyard.—Sirrah  
 Rosamond, I hold my life Gallipot hath vexed his  
 wife.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK She has a horrible high colour  
 indeed.  
 GOSHAWK We shall have your face painted with the  
 same red soon at night, when your husband comes  
 from his rubbers in a false alley; thou wilt not believe  
 me that his bowls run with a wrong bias. 191  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK It cannot sink into me, that he  
 feeds upon stale mutton abroad, having better and  
 fresher at home.  
 GOSHAWK What if I bring thee where thou shalt see  
 him stand at rack and manger?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK I'll saddle him in's kind, and spur  
 him till he kick again.  
 GOSHAWK Shall thou and I ride our journey then?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Here's my hand. 200

163 God-so: an exclamation. Either a corruption of 'catso'  
 (from Italian; meaning penis), or a variant of 'Uds-so', a  
 corruption of 'By God's soul'  
 167, 183 sirrah: see II.i.196  
 177 In good sadness: in all seriousness  
 178-9 hot thing . . . stomach: as a medication; with sexual  
 entendre  
 190 rubbers . . . false alley: from game of bowls: 'rubbers'  
 meant set of three games, with sexual innuendo from  
 'rub'  
 193 stale: with pun on 'stale' meaning prostitute  
 196 at rack and manger: in the midst of abundance  
 (proverbial)  
 197 in's kind: in the same manner  
 199 ride our journey: with sexual innuendo; see 'ride' II.i.161,  
 'voyage' III.i.131

GOSHAWK No more. Come, Master Tiltyard, shall we leap into the stirrups with our women, and amble home?

MASTER TILTYARD Yes, yes, come wife.

MISTRESS TILTYARD In troth sister, I hope you will do well for all this.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT I hope I shall. Farewell good sister: sweet Master Goshawk.

MASTER GALLIPOT Welcome brother, most kindly welcome sir. **210**

OMNES Thanks, sir, for our good cheer.

*Exeunt all but GALLIPOT and his wife*

MASTER GALLIPOT It shall be so; because a crafty knave Shall not outreach me, nor walk by my door With my wife arm in arm, as 'twere his whore, I'll give him a golden coxcomb; thirty pound, Tush Pru, what's thirty pound? Sweet duck, look cheerly.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Thou art worthy of my heart, thou buy'st it dearly.

*Enter LAXTON muffled*

LAXTON (*Aside*) Uds light, the tide's against me; a pox of your pothecary-ship! Oh for some glister to set him going! 'Tis one of Hercules' labours to tread one of these city hens, because their cocks are still crowing over them. There's no turning tail here, I must on. **223**

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh husband see, he comes.

MASTER GALLIPOT Let me deal with him.

LAXTON Bless you, sir.

MASTER GALLIPOT Be you blest too, sir, if you come in peace.

LAXTON Have you any good pudding tobacco, sir?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh pick no quarrels, gentle sir; my husband **230**

Is not a man of weapon, as you are;  
He knows all, I have opened all before him  
Concerning you.

LAXTON (*Aside*) Zounds, has she shown my letters?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Suppose my case were yours, what would you do?

202 amble: originally used only of horses: a slower version of the 'gait'; see III.i.69n

212 because: so that

SD *muffled*: Mulholland suggests three reasons why Laxton might appear 'muffled' at all of his entrances from now on: a) shame (or wounds), after his drubbing from Moll; b) fear of his creditors (he has lost ten angels to Moll); c) in order to move incognito, like a lover or a patron of a brothel

219 glister: suppository, enema ('clyster')

220 tread: copulate with (of a male bird with a hen)

229 pudding tobacco: compressed tobacco, made into rolls resembling a pudding or sausage

At such a pinch, such batteries, such assaults,  
Of father, mother, kindred, to dissolve  
The knot you tied, and to be bound to him?  
How could you shift this storm off?

LAXTON If I know, hang me.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Besides, a story of your death was read

Each minute to me. **239**

LAXTON (*Aside*) What a pox means this riddling?

MASTER GALLIPOT Be wise, sir, let not you and I be tossed

On lawyers' pens; they have sharp nibs and draw  
Men's very heart-blood from them; what need you,  
sir,

To beat the drum of my wife's infamy,  
And call your friends together, sir, to prove  
Your precontract, when sh'has confessed it?

LAXTON Hm sir,  
Has she confessed it?

MASTER GALLIPOT Sh'has, faith, to me, sir,  
Upon your letter sending.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT I have, I have.

LAXTON (*Aside*) If I let this iron cool, call me slave.

—Do you hear, you dame Prudence? Think'st thou,  
vile woman, **250**  
I'll take these blows and wink?

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Upon my knees—

LAXTON Out, impudence.

MASTER GALLIPOT Good sir—

LAXTON You goatish slaves,  
No wild fowl to cut up but mine?

MASTER GALLIPOT Alas sir,  
You make her flesh to tremble: fright her not,  
She shall do reason, and what's fit.

LAXTON I'll have thee,  
Wert thou more common than an hospital,  
And more diseased.

MASTER GALLIPOT But one word, good sir.

LAXTON So sir.

MASTER GALLIPOT I married her, have lien with her,  
and got

Two children on her body, think but on that;  
Have you so beggarly an appetite **260**  
When I upon a dainty dish have fed  
To dine upon my scraps, my leavings? Ha, sir?  
Do I come near you now, sir?

LAXTON Be-lady, you touch me.

MASTER GALLIPOT Would not you scorn to wear my  
clothes, sir?

LAXTON Right, sir.

246 precontract: of marriage; see l. 127

252 goatish: lustful

253 wild fowl: prostitute (eds)

263 Be-lady: corruption of 'By our Lady'

MASTER GALLIPOT Then pray, sir, wear not her, for she's a garment  
 So fitting for my body, I'm loath  
 Another should put it on: you will undo both.  
 Your letter (as she said) complained you had spent  
 In quest of her some thirty pound, I'll pay it;  
 Shall that, sir, stop this gap up 'twixt you two? 270

LAXTON Well, if I swallow this wrong, let her thank you:  
 The money being paid, sir, I am gone;  
 Farewell. Oh women! Happy's he trusts none.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Dispatch him hence, sweet husband.

MASTER GALLIPOT Yes, dear wife.  
 Pray sir, come in: ere Master Laxton part  
 Thou shalt in wine drink to him.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT With all my heart.  
*Exit* MASTER GALLIPOT

How dost thou like my wit?

LAXTON Rarely: that wile  
 By which the serpent did the first woman beguile  
 Did ever since all women's bosoms fill;  
 Y'are apple-eaters all, deceivers still. 280  
*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene iii

*Enter* SIR ALEXANDER WENGRAVE, SIR DAVY DAPPER, SIR ADAM APPLETON *at one door, and* TRAPDOOR *at another door*

SIR ALEXANDER Out with your tale, Sir Davy, to Sir Adam:  
 A knave is in mine eye deep in my debt.

SIR DAVY Nay, if he be a knave, sir, hold him fast.

SIR DAVY *and* SIR ADAM *talk apart*

SIR ALEXANDER Speak softly, what egg is there hatching now?

TRAPDOOR A duck's egg, sir, a duck that has eaten a frog. I have cracked the shell, and some villainy or other will peep out presently; the duck that sits is the bouncing ramp, that roaring girl my mistress; the drake that must tread is your son Sebastian.

SIR ALEXANDER Be quick. 10

TRAPDOOR As the tongue of an oyster-wench.

SIR ALEXANDER And see thy news be true.

SD Q indicates that Master and Mistress Gallipot exit together (after 'him', l. 276), leaving only Laxton on stage. We follow other eds in the arrangement given here, so that Mistress Gallipot hears his final words. However, she could just as well exit after Laxton's 'Rarely'

2 A knave . . . eye: i.e. I can see a knave (who is)  
 8 bouncing ramp: swaggering bold woman

TRAPDOOR As a barber's every Saturday night. Mad Moll—

SIR ALEXANDER Ah.

TRAPDOOR Must be let in without knocking at your back gate.

SIR ALEXANDER So.

TRAPDOOR Your chamber will be made bawdy.

SIR ALEXANDER Good. 20

TRAPDOOR She comes in a shirt of mail.

SIR ALEXANDER How, shirt of mail?

TRAPDOOR Yes sir, or a male shirt, that's to say in man's apparel.

SIR ALEXANDER To my son?

TRAPDOOR Close to your son: your son and her moon will be in conjunction, if all almanacs lie not; her black saveguard is turned into a deep slop, the holes of her upper body to button-holes, her waistcoat to a doublet, her placket to the ancient seat of a codpiece, and you shall take 'em both with standing collars. 31

SIR ALEXANDER Art sure of this?

TRAPDOOR As every throng is sure of a pickpocket, as sure as a whore is of the clients all Michaelmas Term, and of the pox after the term.

SIR ALEXANDER The time of their tilting?

TRAPDOOR Three.

SIR ALEXANDER The day?

TRAPDOOR This.

SIR ALEXANDER Away, ply it, watch her. 40

TRAPDOOR As the devil doth for the death of a bawd, I'll watch her; do you catch her.

SIR ALEXANDER She's fast: here, weave thou the nets, hark.

TRAPDOOR They are made.

SIR ALEXANDER I told them thou didst owe me money: hold it up, maintain't.

TRAPDOOR Stiffly, as a puritan does contention;—  
*(Angrily, as in a quarrel)* Fox, I owe thee not the value of a halfpenny halter. 50

13 As a barber's: barbers had a reputation as news-mongers; see *Epicoeue*, I.ii.39

27 in conjunction: i.e. like planets (when in the same sign of the zodiac); with innuendo: 'conjunction' meant copulation

28 saveguard: see II.i.185 sdn  
 slop: see II.ii.88n

29 upper body: bodice, which was laced through a series of 'holes'  
 waistcoat: a waist-length undergarment

30 placket: the opening at the top of a skirt or petticoat; like 'codpiece', the word usually has sexual associations

31 standing collars: high collars were fashionable for men at this time

34 Michaelmas Term: 'the first term of the legal year, when the termers will have plenty of money' (Cook)

36 tilting: encounter

46 them: i.e. Sir Davy and Sir Adam

- SIR ALEXANDER Thou shalt be hanged in't ere thou  
'scape so. Varlet, I'll make thee look through a grate.  
TRAPDOOR I'll do't presently, through a tavern grate.  
Drawer! Pish. *Exit*
- SIR ADAM Has the knave vexed you, sir?  
SIR ALEXANDER Asked him my money,  
He swears my son received it: oh that boy  
Will ne'er leave heaping sorrows on my heart,  
Till he has broke it quite.
- SIR ADAM Is he still wild?  
SIR ALEXANDER As is a Russian bear.  
SIR ADAM But he has left  
His old haunt with that baggage?  
SIR ALEXANDER Worse still and worse,  
He lays on me his shame, I on him my curse. 61
- SIR DAVY My son Jack Dapper then shall run with him,  
All in one pasture.  
SIR ADAM Proves your son bad too, sir?  
SIR DAVY As villainy can make him: your Sebastian  
Doats but on one drab, mine on a thousand;  
A noise of fiddlers, tobacco, wine, and a whore,  
A mercer that will let him take up more,  
Dice, and a water-spaniel with a duck: oh,  
Bring him abed with these; when his purse jingles,  
Roaring boys follow at's tail, fencers and ningles 70  
(Beasts Adam ne'er gave name to), these horse-  
leeches suck  
My son; he being drawn dry, they all live on smoke.
- SIR ALEXANDER Tobacco?  
SIR DAVY Right; but I have in my brain  
A windmill going that shall grind to dust  
The follies of my son, and make him wise,  
Or a stark fool. Pray lend me your advice.  
BOTH That shall you, good Sir Davy.
- SIR DAVY Here's the springe  
I ha' set to catch this woodcock in: an action  
In a false name (unknown to him) is entered  
I'th'Counter to arrest Jack Dapper.
- BOTH Ha, ha, he. 80
- SIR DAVY Think you the Counter cannot break him?  
SIR ADAM Break him?  
Yes and break's heart too if he lie there long.  
SIR DAVY I'll make him sing a counter-tenor sure.  
SIR ADAM No way to tame him like it; there he shall  
learn  
What money is indeed, and how to spend it.  
SIR DAVY He's bridled there.  
SIR ALEXANDER Ay, yet knows not how to mend it:  
Bedlam cures not more madmen in a year  
Than one of the counters does: men pay more dear  
There for their wit than anywhere; a counter,  
Why 'tis an university, who not sees? 90  
As scholars there, so here men take degrees,  
And follow the same studies all alike.  
Scholars learn first logic and rhetoric,  
So does a prisoner; with fine honey'd speech  
At's first coming in he doth persuade, beseech  
He may be lodged with one that is not itchy,  
To lie in a clean chamber, in sheets not lousy;  
But when he has no money, then does he try  
By subtle logic and quaint sophistry  
To make the keeper trust him.
- SIR ADAM Say they do? 100  
SIR ALEXANDER Then he's a graduate.  
SIR DAVY Say they trust him not?  
SIR ALEXANDER Then is he held a freshman and a sot,  
And never shall commence, but, being still barred,  
Be expelled from the master's side, to th' twopenny  
ward,  
Or else i'th'Hole be placed.  
SIR ADAM When then, I pray,  
Proceeds a prisoner?  
SIR ALEXANDER When, money being the theme,  
He can dispute with his hard creditors' hearts,  
And get out clear, he's then a Master of Arts.  
Sir Davy, send your son to Wood Street College,  
A gentleman can nowhere get more knowledge. 110
- SIR DAVY There gallants study hard.  
SIR ALEXANDER True: to get money.

52 grate: prison grating

53 tavern grate: taverns were identifiable by the latticework on their windows; see *Arden of Faversham*, xiv.30

Drawer: tapster (calling offstage)

59 Russian bear: imported for baiting, and proverbially fierce

60 baggage: strumpet

66 noise: band

67 take up more: i.e. on credit

70 ningles: ingles: boy-favourites, catamites; see *Epicoe*, I.i.27

71 horse-leeches: a) extortioners; b) whores (Mulholland)

77 springe . . . woodcock: proverbial; see *Hamlet*, I.iii.115. A

springe is a trap to catch small birds

80 the Counter: debtor's prison; there were two of this name in London at this time

89-90 counter . . . university: Middleton makes the same analogy elsewhere: see *The Phoenix*, IV.iii.19, and *Michaelmas Term*, III.iv.82-5. Others too make the comparison; see Mulholland

93 logic and rhetoric: principal subjects in the university curriculum at this time

99 quaint: ingenious

103 commence: be admitted to a degree

104 the master's side . . . th' twopenny ward: rooms in the Counter for which prisoners paid, in order to obtain better conditions

105 th'Hole: the name of the worst dungeon in Wood Street

Counter, in which destitute prisoners were held

106 Proceeds: advances from BA to a higher degree

109 Wood Street College: i.e. Wood Street Counter; see l. 80n

SIR DAVY 'Lies by th' heels i'faith: thanks, thanks; I ha'  
sent  
For a couple of bears shall paw him.

*Enter* SERGEANT CURTILAX *and* YEOMAN HANGER

SIR ADAM Who comes yonder?

SIR DAVY They look like puttocks; these should be  
they.

SIR ALEXANDER I know 'em,  
They are officers; sir, we'll leave you.

SIR DAVY My good knights,  
Leave me, you see I'm haunted now with sprites.

BOTH Fare you well, sir.

*Exeunt* SIR ALEXANDER *and* SIR ADAM

CURTILAX This old muzzle-chops should be he by the  
fellow's description.—Save you, sir.

SIR DAVY Come hither, you mad varlets; did not my  
man tell you I watched here for you? 121

CURTILAX One in a blue coat, sir, told us that in this  
place an old gentleman would watch for us, a thing  
contrary to our oath, for we are to watch for every  
wicked member in a city.

SIR DAVY You'll watch then for ten thousand. What's  
thy name, honesty?

CURTILAX Sergeant Curtilax I, sir.

SIR DAVY An excellent name for a sergeant, Curtilax.  
Sergeants indeed are weapons of the law: 130  
When prodigal ruffians far in debt are grown,  
Should not you cut them, citizens were o'erthrown.  
Thou dwell'st hereby in Holborn, Curtilax?

CURTILAX That's my circuit, sir; I conjure most in that  
circle.

SIR DAVY And what young toward whelp is this?

HANGER Of the same litter: his yeoman; sir, my name's  
Hanger.

SIR DAVY Yeoman Hanger:  
One pair of shears sure cut out both your coats; 140  
You have two names most dangerous to men's  
throats.

You two are villainous loads on gentlemen's backs;  
Dear ware, this Hanger and this Curtilax.

CURTILAX We are as other men are, sir; I cannot see  
but he who makes a show of honesty and religion, if  
his claws can fasten to his liking, he draws blood; all  
that live in the world are but great fish and little fish,  
and feed upon one another: some eat up whole men;  
a sergeant cares but for the shoulder of a man. They

112 'Lies by th' heels' i.e. 'he lies, shall lie'; 'by th' heels'  
meant in jail (the reference is to irons)

SD CURTILAX . . . HANGER: see notes to 'Dramatis Personae'

114 puttocks: kites; also used for catchpoles, sergeants

122 One in a blue coat: i.e. a servant

127 honesty: honourable fellow

136 toward: promising, willing, obliging

140 One pair . . . coats: i.e. you are two of a kind (proverbial)

call us knaves and curs, but many times he that sets  
us on worries more lambs one year than we do in  
seven. 152

SIR DAVY Spoke like a noble Cerberus! Is the action  
entered?

HANGER His name is entered in the book of  
unbelievers.

SIR DAVY What book's that?

CURTILAX The book where all prisoners' names stand,  
and not one amongst forty, when he comes in,  
believes to come out in haste. 160

SIR DAVY Be as dogged to him as your office allows you  
to be.

BOTH Oh sir.

SIR DAVY You know the unthrift Jack Dapper?

CURTILAX Ay, ay, sir, that gull? As well as I know my  
yeoman.

SIR DAVY And you know his father too, Sir Davy  
Dapper?

CURTILAX As damned a usurer as ever was among Jews:  
if he were sure his father's skin would yield him any  
money, he would when he dies flay it off, and sell it  
to cover drums for children at Barthol'mew Fair. 172

SIR DAVY (*Aside*) What toads are these to spit poison  
on a man to his face!—Do you see, my honest  
rascals? Yonder Greyhound is the dog he hunts with;  
out of that tavern Jack Dapper will sally: sa, sa; give  
the counter; on, set upon him.

BOTH We'll charge him upo'th'back, sir.

SIR DAVY Take no bail; put mace enough into his  
caudle; double your files, traverse your ground. 180

BOTH Brave, sir.

SIR DAVY Cry arm, arm, arm.

BOTH Thus, sir.

SIR DAVY There boy, there boy, away: look to your  
prey, my true English wolves, and—and so I vanish.

*Exit*

CURTILAX Some warden of the sergeants begat this old  
fellow, upon my life. Stand close.

153 Cerberus: see III.i.25n; 'dogged' (l. 161) plays on this

172 Barthol'mew Fair: held in Smithfield on St  
Bartholomew's Day (24 August); originally a cloth-fair, it  
expanded to become the largest annual London carnival.  
It was not abolished until 1855

175 Greyhound: probably the name of a tavern

176 sa, sa: either a term from hunting: 'a call to attention'  
(Cook); or from fencing: 'an exclamation made when  
delivering a thrust' (Mulholland)

176-7 give the counter: either (from hunting) 'to run a false  
scent', to turn him back; or (from fencing) to make a  
circular parry

179-80 mace . . . caudle: pun on 'mace': a) staff carried by  
sergeants; b) spice. 'Caudle' was gruel mixed with spiced  
ale

180 double . . . ground: military terms, used randomly here

HANGER Shall the ambuscado lie in one place?  
CURTILAX No, nook thou yonder.

*Enter MOLL and TRAPDOOR*

MOLL Ralph. 190  
TRAPDOOR What says my brave captain male and female?

MOLL This Holborn is such a wrangling street.  
TRAPDOOR That's because lawyers walks to and fro in't.  
MOLL Here's such jostling, as if everyone we met were drunk and reeled.

TRAPDOOR Stand, mistress, do you not smell carrion?  
MOLL Carrion? No, yet I spy ravens.  
TRAPDOOR Some poor wind-shaken gallant will anon fall into sore labour, and these men-midwives must bring him to bed i'the Counter: there all those that are great with child with debts lie in. 202

MOLL Stand up.  
TRAPDOOR Like your new maypole.  
HANGER Whist, whew.

CURTILAX Hump, no.  
MOLL Peeping? It shall go hard, huntsmen, but I'll spoil your game. They look for all the world like two infected maltmen coming muffled up in their cloaks in a frosty morning to London. 210

TRAPDOOR A course, captain; a bear comes to the stake.

*Enter JACK DAPPER and GULL*

MOLL It should be so, for the dogs struggle to be let loose.

HANGER Whew.  
CURTILAX Hemp.  
MOLL Hark Trapdoor, follow your leader.  
JACK DAPPER Gull.

GULL Master. 219  
JACK DAPPER Didst ever see such an ass as I am, boy?  
GULL No by my troth, sir, to lose all your money, yet have false dice of your own, why 'tis as I saw a great fellow used t'other day: he had a fair sword and

---

188 ambuscado: ambush, especially the force used therein  
189 nook: hide in that nook  
193 wrangling: a) noisy; b) disputatious  
194 lawyers: several Inns of Court stood in Holborn  
199 wind-shaken: flawed at heart, like timber by high winds  
205-6 Whist . . . Hump: Hanger is trying to attract Curtilax's attention by whistling; 'hump' is probably a signal in response  
208-9 two infected maltmen: Mulholland cites a practice of those who carried malt into the city of carrying rags back home 'for manuring of the soiling of the ground'. This practice would have made them particularly susceptible to infection by the plague  
211 course: the animal pursued (whilst 'coursing' or pursuing game with hounds)

buckler, and yet a butcher dry-beat him with a cudgel.  
MOLL AND TRAPDOOR Honest sergeant! Fly, fly,  
Master Dapper, you'll be arrested else.

JACK DAPPER Run, Gull, and draw.  
GULL Run, master, Gull follows you.

*Exeunt JACK DAPPER and GULL*  
CURTILAX I know you well enough, you're but a whore to hang upon any man. 230

MOLL Whores then are like sergeants, so now hang you.—Draw, rogue, but strike not: for a broken pate they'll keep their beds, and recover twenty marks damages.

CURTILAX You shall pay for this rescue;—run down Shoe Lane and meet him.

TRAPDOOR Shoo, is this a rescue, gentlemen, or no?  
MOLL Rescue? A pox on 'em, Trapdoor, let's away; I'm glad I have done perfect one good work today. If any gentleman be in scrivener's bands, 240  
Send but for Moll, she'll bail him by these hands.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene i

*Enter SIR ALEXANDER WENGRAVE solus*

SIR ALEXANDER Unhappy in the follies of a son  
Led against judgment, sense, obedience,  
And all the powers of nobleness and wit;

*Enter TRAPDOOR*

Oh wretched father.—Now Trapdoor, will she come?  
TRAPDOOR In man's apparel, sir; I am in her heart now,  
And share in all her secrets.

SIR ALEXANDER Peace, peace, peace.  
Here, take my German watch, hang't up in sight,

---

224 dry-beat: beat him with blows that bruised but did not draw blood  
225 Honest sergeant!: we follow Mulholland in retaining the Q-reading here, on the grounds that 'stage business . . . could clear up the apparent difficulty'. Other eds emend to 'servant'  
231 Whores . . . sergeants: playing on method of arrest; see ll. 149  
232 rogue: i.e. Trapdoor  
233 twenty marks: a mark was worth two-thirds of a pound; see I.i.91n  
235 rescue: 'the forcible taking of a person or goods out of custody—a very serious offence' (Cook)  
236 Shoe Lane: ran from Holborn to Fleet Street  
240 in scrivener's bands: 'i.e. in debt' (Mulholland); a 'scrivener' was a notary  
5 heart: confidence  
7 German watch: German clocks and watches are frequently referred to in Jacobean drama; they had a reputation either for ingenuity (as here), or for unreliability (see *Epicoe*, IV.ii.107-8n, *Love's Labours Lost*, III.i.175-8)



That I may see her hang in English for't.  
 TRAPDOOR I warrant you for that now, next sessions  
 rids her, sir. This watch will bring her in better than  
 a hundred constables.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Good Trapdoor, sayst thou so? Thou  
 cheer'st my heart  
 After a storm of sorrow. My gold chain too;  
 Here, take a hundred marks in yellow links.  
 TRAPDOOR That will do well to bring the watch to  
 light, sir:  
 And worth a thousand of your headborough's  
 lanthorns.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Place that o'the court cupboard, let it lie  
 Full in the view of her thief-whorish eye.  
 TRAPDOOR She cannot miss it, sir; I see't so plain  
 That I could steal't myself.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Perhaps thou shalt too, 20  
 That or something as weighty; what she leaves,  
 Thou shalt come closely in, and filch away,  
 And all the weight upon her back I'll lay.  
 TRAPDOOR You cannot assure that, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER No? What lets it?  
 TRAPDOOR Being a stout girl, perhaps she'll desire  
 pressing,  
 Then all the weight must lie upon her belly.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Belly or back I care not so I've one.  
 TRAPDOOR You're of my mind for that, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Hang up my ruff-band with the  
 diamond at it,  
 It may be she'll like that best. 30  
 TRAPDOOR (*Aside*) It's well for her that she must have  
 her choice, he thinks nothing too good for her.—If  
 you hold on this mind a little longer, it shall be the  
 first work I do to turn thief myself; would do a man  
 good to be hanged when he is so well provided for.  
 SIR ALEXANDER So, well said; all hangs well; would she  
 hung so too,  
 The sight would please me more than all their  
 glisterings:  
 Oh that my mysteries to such straits should run,  
 That I must rob myself to bless my son. *Exeunt*

*Enter* SEBASTIAN, with MARY FITZALLARD like a page,  
 and MOLL in man's clothes

9 sessions: of the court  
 16 headborough: constable  
 17 court cupboard: a movable sideboard or cabinet used to  
 display plate etc.  
 22 closely: secretly  
 24 lets: hinders  
 25 pressing: Mulholland identifies a double entendre on a)  
 the *peine forte et dure* which involved the loading of  
 weights upon accused persons to induce them to answer a  
 charge, and b) a reference to coitus  
 38 mysteries: skills, craft

SEBASTIAN Thou hast done me a kind office, without  
 touch 40  
 Either of sin or shame; our loves are honest.  
 MOLL I'd scorn to make such shift to bring you  
 together else.  
 SEBASTIAN Now have I time and opportunity  
 Without all fear to bid thee welcome, love. *Kiss*  
 MARY Never with more desire and harder venture.  
 MOLL How strange this shows, one man to kiss  
 another.  
 SEBASTIAN I'd kiss such men to choose, Moll,  
 Methinks a woman's lip tastes well in a doublet. 49  
 MOLL Many an old madam has the better fortune then,  
 Whose breaths grew stale before the fashion came:  
 If that will help 'em, as you think 'twill do,  
 They'll learn in time to pluck on the hose too.  
 SEBASTIAN The older they wax, Moll—troth I speak  
 seriously,  
 As some have a conceit their drink tastes better  
 In an outlandish cup than in our own,  
 So methinks every kiss she gives me now  
 In this strange form is worth a pair of two.  
 Here we are safe, and furthest from the eye  
 Of all suspicion; this is my father's chamber, 60  
 Upon which floor he never steps till night.  
 Here he mistrusts me not, nor I his coming;  
 At mine own chamber he still pries unto me,  
 My freedom is not there at mine own finding,  
 Still checked and curbed; here he shall miss his  
 purpose.  
 MOLL And what's your business, now you have your  
 mind, sir?  
 At your great suit I promised you to come:  
 I pitied her for name's sake, that a Moll  
 Should be so crossed in love when there's so many  
 That owes nine lays apiece, and not so little: 70  
 My tailor fitted her, how like you his work?  
 SEBASTIAN So well, no art can mend it for this purpose;  
 But to thy wit and help we're chief in debt,  
 And must live still beholding.  
 MOLL Any honest pity  
 I'm willing to bestow upon poor ring-doves.  
 SEBASTIAN I'll offer no worse play.  
 MOLL Nay, and you should, sir,  
 I should draw first and prove the quicker man.

42 shift: effort  
 48 to choose: from choice  
 50 madam: bawd, whore  
 52 that: i.e. male dress  
 58 a pair: a set  
 70 lays: meaning uncertain; perhaps 'wagers' (Bullen); or  
 'lodgings', especially those used for prostitution  
 (Mulholland)  
 74 still: always  
 75 ring-doves: wood pigeons (i.e. lovers)

SEBASTIAN Hold, there shall need no weapon at this meeting,  
But 'cause thou shalt not loose thy fury idle,  
Here take this viol, run upon the guts, 80  
And end thy quarrel singing.

MOLL Like a swan above bridge:  
For look you here's the bridge, and here am I.

SEBASTIAN Hold on, sweet Moll.

MARY I've heard her much commended, sir, for one that was ne'er taught.

MOLL I'm much beholding to 'em. Well, since you'll needs put us together, sir, I'll play my part as well as I can: it shall ne'er be said I came into a gentleman's chamber and let his instrument hang by the walls. 89

SEBASTIAN Why well said, Moll, i'faith; it had been a shame for that gentleman then, that would have let it hung still and ne'er offered thee it.

MOLL There it should have been still then for Moll, for though the world judge impudently of me, I ne'er came into that chamber yet where I took down the instrument myself.

SEBASTIAN Pish, let 'em prate abroad; th'art here where thou art known and loved: there be a thousand close dames that will call the viol an unmannerly instrument for a woman, and therefore talk broadly of thee, when you shall have them sit wider to a worse quality. 102

MOLL Push, I ever fall asleep and think not of 'em, sir; and thus I dream.

SEBASTIAN Prithee let's hear thy dream, Moll.

MOLL

THE SONG

*I dream there is a mistress,  
And she lays out the money,  
She goes unto her sisters,  
She never comes at any.*

Enter SIR ALEXANDER behind them

*She says she went to the Burse for patterns,  
You shall find her at Saint Kathern's,  
And comes home with never a penny.* 110

SEBASTIAN That's a free mistress, faith.

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Ay, ay, ay, like her that sings it; one of thine own choosing.

MOLL But shall I dream again?

*Here comes a wench will brave ye,  
Her courage was so great,  
She lay with one o' the navy,  
Her husband lying i' the Fleet. 120  
Yet oft with him she cavilled,  
I wonder what she ails:  
Her husband's ship lay gravelled,  
When hers could hoise up sails;  
Yet she began like all my foes  
To call whore first: for so do those—  
A pox of all false tails.*

SEBASTIAN Marry, amen say I.

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) So say I too. 129

MOLL Hang up the viol now, sir; all this while I was in a dream, one shall lie rudely then; but being awake, I keep my legs together. A watch: what's o'clock here?

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Now, now she's trapped.

MOLL Between one and two; nay then I care not. A watch and a musician are cousin-germans in one thing, they must both keep time well, or there's no goodness in 'em; the one else deserves to be dashed against a wall, and t'other to have his brains knocked out with a fiddle case. 140

What, a loose chain and a dangling diamond?  
Here were a brave booty for an evening-thief now;

110 *the Burse*: most eds agree that this refers to the Royal Exchange, built in Cornhill by Sir Thomas Gresham in 1566; it was surrounded by small shops selling millinery and other fashionable goods. However, the New Exchange, on the Strand, which also housed fashionable shops, opened in 1609; Gomme rejects Bullen's suggestion that the reference here is to that, on the grounds of date; however, *Epicoene* (1609/10), I.iii.40 undoubtedly refers to the New Exchange, so it is clear that references to it began to appear in the drama as soon as it opened

*patterns*: samples (of goods or fabrics). Mulholland suggests a pun on 'patrons'

111 *Saint Kathern's*: St Katherine's, the dockside area in the east end of London, notorious for its brewhouses and taverns

117 *brave*: challenge, threaten; embolden

120 *the Fleet*: with play on the Fleet prison

127 *tails*: cant term for sexual organs, and hence, by extension, 'people'; with pun on 'tales'

136 cousin-germans: first cousins (with pun on 'German watch')

79 'cause thou . . . idle: Cook suggests a play on 'fury' meaning musical inspiration; hence, 'so that your passion is not wasted'

81 swan: proverbially, the swan sang before dying  
bridge: with play on the bridge of the viol

101 sit wider: the instrument is a viol da gamba, played, like the modern cello, with the body of the instrument held between the knees. This is the culmination of the extended innuendo on 'instrument'

104 dream: as well as the usual meaning, has the secondary meaning of 'make melody'

108 *sisters*: a) neighbours; b) prostitutes (Mulholland)

109 comes at: a) arrives at; b) comes into sexual contact with (Mulholland)

*any*: a) money; b) sexual partners; c) sexual fulfilment (Mulholland)

There's many a younger brother would be glad  
 To look twice in at a window for't,  
 And wriggle in and out like an eel in a sandbag.  
 Oh, if men's secret youthful faults should judge 'em,  
 'Twould be the general'st execution  
 That ere was seen in England! **148**  
 There would be but few left to sing the ballets, there  
 would be so much work: most of our brokers would  
 be chosen for hangmen, a good day for them: they  
 might renew their wardrobes of free cost then.

SEBASTIAN This is the roaring wench must do us good.

MARY No poison, sir, but serves us for some use,  
 Which is confirmed in her.

SEBASTIAN Peace, peace.  
 Foot, I did hear him sure, where'er he be.

MOLL Who did you hear?

SEBASTIAN My father.

'Twas like a sight of his; I must be wary.

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) No? Wilt not be? Am I alone  
 so wretched **159**

That nothing takes? I'll put him to his plunge for't.

SEBASTIAN Life, here he comes.—Sir, I beseech you  
 take it.

Your way of teaching does so much content me,  
 I'll make it four pound; here's forty shillings, sir:  
 I think I name it right (help me, good Moll),  
 Forty in hand.

MOLL Sir, you shall pardon me,  
 I have more of the meanest scholar I can teach;  
 This pays me more than you have offered yet.

SEBASTIAN At the next quarter  
 When I receive the means my father 'lows me,  
 You shall have t'other forty.

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) This were well now, **170**  
 Were't to a man whose sorrows had blind eyes,  
 But mine behold his follies and untruths

With two clear glasses.—How now? *Comes forward*  
 Sir.

SEBASTIAN What's he there?

SIR ALEXANDER You're come in good time, sir, I've a suit to  
 you,  
 I'd crave your present kindness.

SIR ALEXANDER What is he there?

145 eel . . . sandbag: proverbial

149 ballets: i.e. ballads, commemorating the last words of the  
 condemned

150 brokers: pawnbrokers

152 renew . . . cost: 'hangmen traditionally received their  
 victims' clothing' (Mulholland)

156 Foot: contraction of 'God's foot'

158 sight: sigh

160 takes: takes effect, succeeds

plunge: dilemma

163 forty shillings: there were twenty shillings to a pound

167 This: i.e. the meanest scholar

SEBASTIAN A gentleman, a musician, sir, one of  
 excellent fingering.

SIR ALEXANDER Ay, I think so.— (*Aside*) I wonder how  
 they 'scaped her.

SEBASTIAN Has the most delicate stroke, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER A stroke indeed.— (*Aside*) I feel it at  
 my heart. **180**

SEBASTIAN Puts down all your famous musicians.

SIR ALEXANDER Ay.— (*Aside*) A whore may put down a  
 hundred of 'em.

SEBASTIAN Forty shillings is the agreement, sir,  
 between us:

Now sir, my present means mounts but to half on't.

SIR ALEXANDER And he stands upon the whole.

SEBASTIAN Ay indeed does he, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER And will do still, he'll ne'er be in other  
 tale.

SEBASTIAN Therefore I'd stop his mouth, sir, and I  
 could.

SIR ALEXANDER Hum, true, there is no other way  
 indeed;—

(*Aside*) His folly hardens, shame must needs succeed.

—Now sir, I understand you profess music. **190**

MOLL I am a poor servant to that liberal science, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER Where is it you teach?

MOLL Right against Clifford's Inn.

SIR ALEXANDER Hum, that's a fit place for it; you have  
 many scholars?

MOLL And some of worth, whom I may call my masters.

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Ay true, a company of  
 whoremasters.

—You teach to sing too?

MOLL Marry do I, sir.

SIR ALEXANDER I think you'll find an apt scholar of my  
 son, especially for prick-song.

MOLL I have much hope of him. **200**

SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) I am sorry for't, I have the less  
 for that.—You can play any lesson?

MOLL At first sight, sir.

177 fingering: a) of instrument; b) pilfering; c) with sexual  
 innuendo

178 how they . . . her: i.e. how they escaped her pilfering  
 fingers

181 Puts down: surpasses; Sir Alexander puns on a) a sexual  
 sense, and b) 'kills', through venereal disease

183 Forty shillings . . . agreement: this does not tally with the  
 previously agreed amount; see l. 163

186 he'll . . . tale: i.e. he'll never tell a different story; with  
 pun on 'tale' meaning reckoning, account: 'he'll never  
 reckon the account differently'

187 and: if

197 sing: with pun on 'sing' meaning copulate (see *Troilus*  
 and *Cressida*, V.ii.9–10)

199 prick-song: music written or 'pricked' down, as distinct  
 from that sung from memory or by ear; the obvious  
 sexual pun was common

SIR ALEXANDER There's a thing called the witch, can you play that?  
 MOLL I would be sorry anyone should mend me in't.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Ay, I believe thee, thou hast so bewitched my son,  
 No care will mend the work that thou hast done.  
 I have bethought myself, since my art fails,  
 I'll make her policy the art to trap her.  
 Here are four angels marked with holes in them 210  
 Fit for his cracked companions, gold he will give her;  
 These will I make induction to her ruin,  
 And rid shame from my house, grief from my heart.  
 —Here, son, in what you take content and pleasure,  
 Want shall not curb you; pay the gentleman  
 His latter half in gold.  
 SEBASTIAN I thank you, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER (*Aside*) Oh may the operation on't end three:  
 In her, life; shame in him; and grief in me. *Exit*  
 SEBASTIAN Faith thou shalt have 'em, 'tis my father's gift,  
 Never was man beguiled with better shift. 220  
 MOLL He that can take me for a male musician,  
 I cannot choose but make him my instrument  
 And play upon him.

*Exeunt omnes*

## Act IV, scene ii

*Enter* MISTRESS GALLIPOT and MISTRESS OPENWORK

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Is then that bird of yours, Master Goshawk, so wild?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK A goshawk, a puttock: all for prey. He angles for fish, but he loves flesh better.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Is't possible his smooth face should have wrinkles in't, and we not see them?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Possible? Why, have not many handsome legs in silk stockings villainous splay feet for all their great roses?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Troth sirrah, thou sayst true. 10  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Didst never see an archer, as thou'st walked by Bunhill, look asquint when he drew his bow?

204 the witch: the name of several popular songs

206 mend: surpass

210 angels: see II.i.140n

3 puttock: kite

4 fish: 'cant for loose women or female genitals' (Cook); see III.i.99n

8 silk stockings: fashionable amongst gallants

9 roses: ornamental rosettes decorating the shoe; see woodcut on page 326

12 Bunhill: archery practice and matches were regularly held in this old artillery ground

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Yes, when his arrows have fine toward Islington, his eyes have shot clean contrary towards Pimlico.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK For all the world, so does Master Goshawk double with me.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Oh fie upon him, if he double once he's not for me. 20  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Because Goshawk goes in a shag-ruff band, with a face sticking up in't which shows like an agate set in a cramp-ring, he thinks I'm in love with him.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT 'Las, I think he takes his mark amiss in thee.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK He has by often beating into me made me believe that my husband kept a whore.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Very good. 29  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Swore to me that my husband this very morning went in a boat with a tilt over it to the Three Pigeons at Brainford, and his punk with him under his tilt.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT That were wholesome.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK I believed it, fell a-swearing at him, cursing of harlots, made me ready to hoise up sail and be there as soon as he.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT So, so. 38  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK And for that voyage Goshawk comes hither incontinently: but sirrah, this water-spaniel dives after no duck but me; his hope is having me at Brainford to make me cry quack.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Art sure of it?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Sure of it? My poor innocent Openwork came in as I was poking my ruff, presently hit I him i'the teeth with the Three Pigeons: he forswore all, I up and opened all, and now stands he in a shop hard by, like a musket on a rest, to hit Goshawk i'the eye when he comes to fetch me to the boat. 50  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Such another lame gelding offered to carry me through thick and thin—Laxton,

14 fine: flown

16 Pimlico: part of London; a popular resort for excursions. It was in a different direction from Islington

19 double: act deceitfully

23 cramp-ring: worn as a protection against illness. 'The image is of a small head in the centre of an enormous ruff' (Mulholland)

27 beating into me: i.e. repeating to me

31 tilt: awning over a boat

32 punk: whore

40 incontinently: immediately

41 duck: see 'wild fowl', III.ii.253

45 poking my ruff: crimping the pleats of the ruff; with quibble on 'ruff' (female genitals)

48 musket . . . rest: early muskets were so heavy that they needed a support for the barrel

sirrah—but I am rid of him now.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Happy is the woman can be rid  
 of 'em all; 'las, what are your whisking gallants to our  
 husbands, weigh 'em rightly man for man?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Troth, mere shallow things.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Idle simple things, running  
 heads; and yet let 'em run over us never so fast, we  
 shopkeepers, when all's done, are sure to have 'em in  
 our purse-nets at length, and when they are in, Lord,  
 what simple animals they are! Then they hang the  
 head. 63  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Then they droop.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Then they write letters.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Then they cog.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Then deal they underhand with  
 us, and we must ingle with our husbands abed; and  
 we must swear they are our cousins, and able to do us  
 a pleasure at court. 70  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT And yet when we have done our  
 best, all's but put into a riven dish; we are but  
 frumped at and libelled upon.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Oh if it were the good Lord's  
 will, there were a law made no citizen should trust  
 any of 'em all.

Enter GOSHAWK

MISTRESS GALLIPOT Hush sirrah, Goshawk flutters.  
 GOSHAWK How now, are you ready?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Nay are you ready? A little thing  
 you see makes us ready. 80  
 GOSHAWK Us? Why, must she make one i' the voyage?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Oh by any means: do I know  
 how my husband will handle me?  
 GOSHAWK (*Aside*) Foot, how shall I find water to keep  
 these two mills going?—Well, since you'll needs be

clapped under hatches, if I sail not with you both till  
 all split, hang me up at the mainyard and duck me.—  
 It's but liquoring them both soundly, and then you  
 shall see their cork heels fly up high, like two swans  
 when their tails are above water, and their long necks  
 under water, diving to catch gudgeons.—Come,  
 come, oars stand ready, the tide's with us, on with  
 those false faces; blow winds, and thou shalt take thy  
 husband casting out his net to catch fresh salmon at  
 Brainford.

MISTRESS GALLIPOT I believe you'll eat of a cod's head  
 of your own dressing before you reach half way  
 thither. *They mask themselves*  
 GOSHAWK So, so, follow close; pin as you go.

Enter LAXTON *muffled*

LAXTON Do you hear? 100  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Yes, I thank my ears.  
 LAXTON I must have a bout with your pothecaryship.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT At what weapon?  
 LAXTON I must speak with you.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT No.  
 LAXTON No? You shall.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Shall? Away, soused sturgeon, half  
 fish, half flesh.  
 LAXTON 'Faith, gib, are you spitting? I'll cut your tail,  
 puss-cat, for this. 110  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT 'Las poor Laxton, I think thy tail's  
 cut already. Your worst.  
 LAXTON If I do not— *Exit*  
 GOSHAWK Come, ha' you done?

Enter MASTER OPENWORK

'Sfoot, Rosamond, your husband.  
 MASTER OPENWORK How now? Sweet Master  
 Goshawk, none more welcome,

55 whisking: smart, lively  
 58 running: flighty  
 61 purse-nets: bag-shaped net with draw-string opening,  
 used for catching rabbits. 'Rabbit' or 'cony' was thieves'  
 cant for a dupe  
 62 . . . they are! Then they . . .: the duplication of a speech  
 prefix between ' . . . they are' and 'Then . . .' leads some  
 eds to conclude that a fault was introduced into Q here  
 during type resetting, probably the omission of a speech  
 from Mistress Gallipot; see Cook. Following  
 Mulholland, however, we conclude that the sense is clear  
 enough to justify running the two on  
 62-3 hang the head . . . droop: with double entendres  
 66 cog: a) wheedle; b) cheat  
 68 ingle: a) fondle; b) coax  
 72 all's put . . . dish: i.e. it's all in vain; 'riven' meant split,  
 broken  
 73 frumped at: mocked  
 84 water: with sexual innuendo ('water' meaning semen: see  
*Epicœne*, IV.iii.36)

86 clapped under hatches: with sexual entendre: 'clapped'  
 'used catachrestically for "clip" (= embrace)' (Cook)  
 87 all split: all go to pieces  
 88 liquoring them: plying them with liquor  
 89 cork heels: fashionable at the time  
 91 gudgeons: small fish used for bait; with play on 'to  
 swallow or gape for a gudgeon', meaning to be easily  
 deceived  
 96-7 you'll eat . . . dressing: i.e. you'll be caught out by your  
 own plans. A 'cod's head' was a blockhead; with sexual  
 innuendo  
 99 pin: fasten (the masks)  
 102 bout: usually implies a sexual encounter; Laxton plays on  
 this, as does Mistress Gallipot  
 109 gib: a term of reproach, especially for an old woman;  
 literally, a male cat  
 112 Your worst: i.e. do your worst. Cook emends to 'you're  
 worsed' (meant you're worsted), but this does not lead  
 well into Laxton's next line

- I have wanted your embracements: when friends  
meet,  
The music of the spheres sounds not more sweet  
Than does their conference. Who is this? Rosamond?  
Wife? How now, sister?
- GOSHAWK Silence if you love me.  
MASTER OPENWORK Why masked?  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Does a mask grieve you, sir?  
MASTER OPENWORK It does.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Then y'are best get you a-  
mumming. 121
- GOSHAWK 'Sfoot, you'll spoil all.  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT May not we cover our bare faces  
with masks  
As well as you cover your bald heads with hats?  
MASTER OPENWORK No masks; why, th'are thieves to  
beauty, that rob eyes  
Of admiration in which true love lies.  
Why are masks worn? Why good? Or why desired?  
Unless by their gay covers wits are fired  
To read the vildest looks; many bad faces  
(Because rich gems are treasured up in cases) 130  
Pass by their privilege current; but as caves  
Damn misers' gold, so masks are beauties' graves.  
Men ne'er meet women with such muffled eyes,  
But they curse her that first did masks devise,  
And swear it was some beldam. Come, off with't.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK I will not.  
MASTER OPENWORK Good faces masked are jewels kept  
by sprites:  
Hide none but bad ones, for they poison men's  
sights;  
Show them as shopkeepers do their broidered stuff,  
By owl-light; fine wares cannot be open enough.  
Prithee, sweet Rose, come strike this sail.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Sail?  
MASTER OPENWORK Ha!  
Yes, wife, strike sail, for storms are in thine eyes. 141  
MISTRESS OPENWORK They're here, sir, in my brows if  
any rise.
- 
- 116 wanted: missed  
117 music of the spheres: in the Ptolemaic system, the  
heavenly spheres were believed to make music as they  
moved  
121 a-mumming: mummers' plays were mimed, without  
dialogue. She seems to be telling her husband to keep  
silent  
130 Pass . . . current: 'i.e. are received as genuine or honest,  
because of the privilege conferred by masks' (Cook)  
134 beldam: hag, witch  
139 owl-light: twilight. There were frequent complaints that  
shopkeepers made use of bad light to obscure the poor  
quality of their goods  
142 in my brows: Cook suggests a possible allusion to the  
female cuckold's horns
- MASTER OPENWORK Ha, brows? What says she, friend?  
Pray tell me why  
Your two flags were advanced; the comedy,  
Come, what's the comedy?  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT *Westward Ho.*  
MASTER OPENWORK How?  
MISTRESS OPENWORK 'Tis *Westward Ho* she says.  
GOSHAWK Are you both mad?  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Is't market day at Brainford, and  
your ware  
Not sent up yet?  
MASTER OPENWORK What market day? What ware?  
MISTRESS OPENWORK A pie with three pigeons in't, 'tis  
drawn and stays your cutting up. 150  
GOSHAWK As you regard my credit—  
MASTER OPENWORK Art mad?  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Yes, lecherous goat; baboon.  
MASTER OPENWORK Baboon? Then toss me in a  
blanket.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK (*To* MISTRESS GALLIPOT) Do I it  
well?  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT (*To* MISTRESS OPENWORK) Rarely.  
GOSHAWK Belike, sir, she's not well; best leave her.  
MASTER OPENWORK No,  
I'll stand the storm now, how fierce so e'er it blow.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Did I for this lose all my friends?  
Refuse 161  
Rich hopes and golden fortunes, to be made  
A stale to a common whore?  
MASTER OPENWORK This does amaze me.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Oh God, oh God, feed at  
reversion now?  
A strumpet's leaving?  
MASTER OPENWORK Rosamond.
- 
- 144 Your two flags: flags were hoisted on the tops of theatres  
shortly before a performance started. Mulholland  
suggests that the specific reference is to the masks  
145 *Westward Ho*: play by Dekker and Webster (1604–5), in  
which citizens' wives and their gallants travel west to  
Brentford. 'Westward ho!' was the cry of watermen going  
west  
147 ware: with sexual entendre; see II.i.241–5  
149 three pigeons: referring to the Three Pigeons Inn, with  
possible reference to 'wild fowl' (prostitutes); this is  
supported by 'cutting up' (see III.ii.253)  
153 baboon: traditionally viewed as a lustful animal  
154–5 toss . . . blanket: a rough, irregular form of punishment;  
see *Epicœne*, V.iv.14. Cook suggests a play on 'blanket-  
love' (illicit amours)  
163 stale: a) a lover or mistress ridiculed for the amusement  
of a rival; b) decoy  
163–203 Q prints this as a mixture of prose and verse;  
however, there are some rhymes and clear pentameters  
that suggest it should all be set as verse, albeit rough  
164 reversion: left-overs of a meal

GOSHAWK (*Aside*) I sweat; would I lay in Cold Harbour.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Thou hast struck ten thousand  
 daggers through my heart.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Not I, by heaven, sweet wife.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Go, devil, go;  
 That which thou swear'st by damns thee.  
 GOSHAWK (*To* MISTRESS OPENWORK) 'S heart, will you  
 undo me? 170  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Why stay you here? The star by  
 which you sail  
 Shines yonder above Chelsea; you lose your shore;  
 If this moon light you, seek out your light whore.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Ha?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Push, you western pug!  
 GOSHAWK (*Aside*) Zounds, now hell roars.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK With whom you tilted in a pair  
 of oars,  
 This very morning.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Oars?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK At Brainford, sir.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Rack not my patience. Master  
 Goshawk,  
 Some slave has buzzed this into her, has he not?  
 I run a tilt in Brainford with a woman?  
 'Tis a lie: 180  
 What old bawd tells thee this? 'Sdeath, 'tis a lie.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK 'Tis one to thy face shall justify  
 All that I speak.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Ud'soul, do but name that rascal.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK No sir, I will not.  
 GOSHAWK (*Aside*) Keep thee there, girl. (*To them*)  
 Then!  
 MASTER OPENWORK Sister, know you this varlet?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Yes.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Swear true;  
 Is there a rogue so low damned? A second Judas?  
 A common hangman? Cutting a man's throat?  
 Does it to his face? Bite me behind my back?  
 A cur dog? Swear if you know this hell-hound.

166 Cold Harbour: a seedy area of tenements on Upper Thames Street that had become a sanctuary for debtors, vagrants and malefactors; see *Epicoene*, II.v.118. Goshawk puns on the name  
 171-2 star . . . Chelsea: Chelsea is to the west of London, on the way to Brentford. 'Star' alludes to the whore, and Mulholland suggests a possible reference too to Venus (suggestive of wantonness), the morning or evening star  
 172 lose your shore: i.e. lose your way  
 173 light whore: wanton whore  
 174 western pug: a) whore (from Brentford in the west); b) bargemen who navigated down the Thames to London  
 175 tilted: jostled, with play on the boat with a tilt (see above, l. 31)  
 182 one to: i.e. one who to  
 183 Ud'soul: God's soul

MISTRESS GALLIPOT In truth I do.  
 MASTER OPENWORK His name?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Not for the world,  
 To have you to stab him.  
 GOSHAWK (*Aside*) Oh brave girls, worth gold. 191  
 MASTER OPENWORK A word, honest Master Goshawk.  
*Draws out his sword*  
 GOSHAWK What do you mean, sir?  
 MASTER OPENWORK Keep off, and if the devil can give  
 a name  
 To this new fury, holla it through my ear,  
 Or wrap it up in some hid character:  
 I'll ride to Oxford and watch out mine eyes  
 But I'll hear the brazen head speak; or else  
 Show me but one hair of his head or beard,  
 That I may sample it. If the fiend I meet  
 In mine own house, I'll kill him—the street, 200  
 Or at the church door:—there ('cause he seeks to untie  
 The knot God fastens) he deserves most to die.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK My husband titles him.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Master Goshawk, pray sir,  
 Swear to me that you know him or know him not,  
 Who makes me at Brainford to take up a petticoat  
 Besides my wife's.  
 GOSHAWK By heaven that man I know not.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Come, come, you lie.  
 GOSHAWK Will you not have all out?  
 By heaven, I know no man beneath the moon  
 Should do you wrong, but if I had his name,  
 I'd print it in text letters.  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Print thine own then, 210  
 Didst not thou swear to me he kept his whore?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT And that in sinful Brainford they  
 would commit  
 That which our lips did water at, sir,—ha?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK Thou spider, that hast woven thy  
 cunning web  
 In mine own house t'insnare me: hast not thou  
 Sucked nourishment even underneath this roof,  
 And turned it all to poison, spitting it  
 On thy friend's face (my husband), he as 'twere  
 sleeping?

191 worth gold: proverbial  
 195 hid character: code  
 197 brazen head: Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay spent seven years making a brass head, in order to ask it whether it were possible to build a wall of brass round England. However, owing to the ineptitude of a servant, they failed to hear it speak; see Robert Greene, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589), for which Middleton wrote a new prologue and epilogue in 1602  
 203 titles: addresses (Mulholland)  
 209 Should: i.e. who should  
 210 text letters: large or capital letters  
 217 poison: spiders were reputed to be poisonous

- Only to leave him ugly to mine eyes, 219  
That they might glance on thee?
- MISTRESS GALLIPOT Speak, are these lies?  
GOSHAWK Mine own shame me confounds.  
MASTER OPENWORK No more, he's stung;  
Who'd think that in one body there could dwell  
Deformity and beauty, heaven and hell?  
Goodness I see is but outside: we all set,  
In rings of gold, stones that be counterfeit:  
I thought you none.  
GOSHAWK Pardon me.  
MASTER OPENWORK Truth, I do.  
This blemish grows in nature, not in you,  
For man's creation stick even moles in scorn  
On fairest cheeks. Wife, nothing is perfect born.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK I thought you had been born  
perfect. 230  
MASTER OPENWORK What's this whole world but a gilt  
rotten pill?  
For at the heart lies the old core still.  
I'll tell you, Master Goshawk,—ay, in your eye  
I have seen wanton fire; and then to try  
The soundness of my judgment, I told you  
I kept a whore, made you believe 'twas true,  
Only to feel how your pulse beat, but find  
The world can hardly yield a perfect friend.  
Come, come, a trick of youth, and 'tis forgiven;  
This rub put by, our love shall run more even. 240  
MISTRESS OPENWORK You'll deal upon men's wives no  
more?  
GOSHAWK No: you teach me  
A trick for that.  
MISTRESS OPENWORK Troth, do not; they'll o'erreach  
thee.  
MASTER OPENWORK Make my house yours, sir, still.  
GOSHAWK No.  
MASTER OPENWORK I say you shall:  
Seeing, thus besieged, it holds out, 'twill never fall.
- Enter* MASTER GALLIPOT, *and* GREENWIT *like a sumner*,  
LAXTON *muffled, aloof off*
- OMNES How now?  
MASTER GALLIPOT With me, sir?  
GREENWIT You, sir. I have gone snaffling up and down  
by your door this hour to watch for you.

228 moles: Mulholland identifies these as patches: beauty spots stuck on the face to hide a blemish or highlight a beautiful feature  
232 core: i.e. of Adam and Eve's apple  
240 rub: obstacle (from game of bowls)  
241 deal upon: set to work upon  
SD *sumner*: summoner, who summoned people to appear in court  
248 snaffling: snuffing. Summoners were frequently represented as snuffing as a symptom of syphilis

- MISTRESS GALLIPOT What's the matter, husband? 249  
GREENWIT I have caught a cold in my head, sir, by  
sitting up late in the Rose tavern, but I hope you  
understand my speech.  
MASTER GALLIPOT So, sir.  
GREENWIT I cite you by the name of Hippocrates  
Gallipot, and you by the name of Prudence Gallipot,  
to appear upon Crastino, do you see, Crastino sancti  
Dunstani, this Easter term, in Bow Church.  
MASTER GALLIPOT Where, sir? What says he? 258  
GREENWIT Bow: Bow Church, to answer to a libel of  
precontract on the part and behalf of the said  
Prudence and another: you're best, sir, take a copy of  
the citation; 'tis but twelpepence.  
OMNES A citation?  
MASTER GALLIPOT You pocky-nosed rascal, what slave  
fees you to this?  
LAXTON (*Coming forward*) Slave? (*Aside to Goshawk*) I  
ha' nothing to do with you, do you hear, sir?  
GOSHAWK (*Aside to Laxton*) Laxton, is't not? What  
vagary is this?  
MASTER GALLIPOT Trust me, I thought, sir, this storm  
long ago 270  
Had been full laid, when (if you be remembered)  
I paid you the last fifteen pound, besides  
The thirty you had first; for then you swore—  
LAXTON Tush, tush sir, oaths;  
Truth, yet I'm loath to vex you—tell you what:  
Make up the money I had an hundred pound,  
And take your bellyful of her.  
MASTER GALLIPOT An hundred pound?  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT What, a hundred pound? He gets  
none: what, a hundred pound?  
MASTER GALLIPOT Sweet Pru, be calm; the gentleman  
offers thus: 280  
If I will make the moneys that are past  
A hundred pound, he will discharge all courts,  
And give his bond never to vex us more.  
MISTRESS GALLIPOT A hundred pound? 'Las, take, sir,  
but threescore,  
Do you seek my undoing?  
LAXTON I'll not bate one sixpence.—

251 Rose: a common name for taverns; perhaps the one at Temple Bar, frequented by lawyers  
254 Hippocrates: the apothecary is, ironically, named after the famous Greek physician  
256–7 Crastino sancti Dunstani: on the morrow of St Dunstan's Day: i.e. 20 May  
259 Bow Church: the famous church on the south side of Cheapside, in which sat the Ecclesiastical Court of Arches  
libel: in ecclesiastical law, the plaintiff's written declaration of charges  
264 pocky-nosed: i.e. from syphilis; see above l. 248n  
285 bate: reduce (by)



(*Aside to Mistress Gallipot*) I'll maul you, puss, for spitting.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT (*Aside to Laxton*) Do thy worst— Will fourscore stop thy mouth?  
 LAXTON No.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Yare a slave, Thou cheat; I'll now tear money from thy throat. Husband, lay hold on yonder tawny-coat.  
 GREENWIT Nay, gentlemen, seeing your women are so hot, I must lose my hair in their company, I see. 291  
*Takes off his wig*  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK His hair sheds off, and yet he speaks not so much in the nose as he did before.  
 GOSHAWK He has had the better chirurgeon.—Master Greenwit, is your wit so raw as to play no better a part than a sumner's?  
 MASTER GALLIPOT I pray, who plays *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* in this company?  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Dear husband, pardon me, I did dissemble, Told thee I was his precontracted wife, 300  
 When letters came from him for thirty pound, I had no shift but that.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT A very clean shift: But able to make me lousy. On.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT Husband, I plucked— When he had tempted me to think well of him— Gelt feathers from thy wings, to make him fly More lofty.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT A' the top of you, wife: on.  
 MISTRESS GALLIPOT He having wasted them, comes now for more, Using me as a ruffian doth his whore, Whose sin keeps him in breath. By heaven I vow Thy bed he never wronged more than he does now.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT My bed? Ha, ha, like enough; a shop-board will serve 311  
 To have a cuckold's coat cut out upon: Of that we'll talk hereafter.—You're a villain.  
 LAXTON Hear me but speak, sir, you shall find me none.

289 tawny-coat: i.e. Greenwit, who is wearing the tawny-coloured livery of the summoner  
 291 hot . . . hair: more allusions to syphilis; 'hot' meant sexually eager (with possible reference to burning effects of syphilis); hair loss was another symptom of the disease  
 294 chirurgeon: surgeon  
 297-8 *A Knack . . . Man*: the title of an early anonymous comedy of 1594  
 302 shift: strategem. Her husband then puns on the sense of 'underclothing'  
 305 Gelt: eds (Get Q): golden. Most eds somewhat uneasily conclude that this is the most plausible emendation  
 308 ruffian: pimp  
 311 shop-board: shop counter

OMNES Pray sir, be patient and hear him.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT I am muzzled for biting, sir; use me how you will.  
 LAXTON The first hour that your wife was in my eye, Myself with other gentlemen sitting by In your shop tasting smoke, and speech being used That men who have fairest wives are most abused 320  
 And hardly 'scaped the horn, your wife maintained That only such spots in city dames were stained Justly but by men's slanders: for her own part, She vowed that you had so much of her heart, No man by all his wit, by any wile Never so fine spun, should yourself beguile Of what in her was yours.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Yet, Pru, tis well; Play out your game at Irish, sir: who wins?  
 MISTRESS OPENWORK The trial is when she comes to bearing.  
 LAXTON I scorned one woman thus should brave all men, 330  
 And (which more vexed me) a she-citizen. Therefore I laid siege to her: out she held, Gave many a brave repulse, and me compelled With shame to sound retreat to my hot lust; Then seeing all base desires raked up in dust, And that to tempt her modest ears I swore Ne'er to presume again, she said her eye Would ever give me welcome honestly; And, since I was a gentleman, if it run low, She would my state relieve, not to o'erthrow 340  
 Your own and hers; did so; then seeing I wrought Upon her meekness, me she set at nought; And yet to try if I could turn that tide, You see what stream I strove with; but, sir, I swear By heaven, and by those hopes men lay up there, I neither have nor had a base intent To wrong your bed. What's done is merriment; Your gold I pay back with this interest: When I had most power to do't, I wronged you least.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT If this no gullery be, sir—  
 OMNES No, no, on my life.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT Then, sir, I am beholden—not to you, wife— 351  
 But Master Laxton, to your want of doing ill, Which it seems you have not. Gentlemen, Tarry and dine here all.  
 MASTER OPENWORK Brother, we have a jest

322-3 only . . . slanders: Mulholland suggests this becomes clearer if 'but' means 'if not': 'the stains on women's characters are just only if not the result of men's slanders'  
 328 Irish: a game similar to backgammon  
 329 bearing: in Irish and backgammon, a term for the removal of a piece at the end of a game; with a quibble on 'child-bearing'  
 341 did so: i.e. she did so

As good as yours to furnish out a feast.  
 MASTER GALLIPOT We'll crown our table with it. Wife,  
 brag no more  
 Of holding out: who most brags is most whore.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene i

*Enter* JACK DAPPER, MOLL, SIR BEAUTEOUS GANYMEDE,  
 and SIR THOMAS LONG

JACK DAPPER But prithee Master Captain Jack, be  
 plain and perspicuous with me: was it your Meg of  
 Westminster's courage that rescued me from the  
 Poultry puttocks indeed?

MOLL The valour of my wit, I ensure you, sir, fetched you  
 off bravely, when you were i'the forlorn hope among  
 those desperates. Sir Beauteous Ganymede here and Sir  
 Thomas Long heard that cuckoo, my man Trapdoor,  
 sing the note of your ransom from captivity.

SIR BEAUTEOUS Uds so, Moll, where's that Trapdoor? **10**

MOLL Hanged I think by this time; a justice in this  
 town, that speaks nothing but 'Make a mittimus,  
 away with him to Newgate', used that rogue like a  
 firework to run upon a line betwixt him and me.

OMNES How, how?

MOLL Marry, to lay trains of villainy to blow up my life;  
 I smelt the powder, spied what linstock gave fire to  
 shoot against the poor captain of the galley-foist, and

away slid I my man like a shovel-board shilling. He  
 struts up and down the suburbs I think, and eats up  
 whores, feeds upon a bawd's garbage. **21**

SIR THOMAS Sirrah Jack Dapper.

JACK DAPPER What sayst, Tom Long?

SIR THOMAS Thou hadst a sweet-faced boy, hail-fellow  
 with thee, to your little Gull: how is he spent?

JACK DAPPER Troth I whistled the poor little buzzard  
 off o' my fist, because when he waited upon me at the  
 ordinaries, the gallants hit me i'the teeth still, and  
 said I looked like a painted alderman's tomb, and the  
 boy at my elbow like a death's head.—Sirrah Jack,  
 Moll. **31**

MOLL What says my little Dapper?

SIR BEAUTEOUS Come, come, walk and talk, walk and  
 talk.

JACK DAPPER Moll and I'll be i'the midst.

MOLL These knights shall have squires' places, belike  
 then: well Dapper, what say you?

JACK DAPPER Sirrah Captain Mad Mary, the gull my  
 own father, Dapper Sir Davy, laid these London boot-  
 halers, the catchpoles, in ambush to set upon me. **40**

OMNES Your father? Away, Jack.

JACK DAPPER By the tassels of this handkercher 'tis  
 true; and what was his warlike stratagem, think you?

He thought because a wicker cage tames a  
 nightingale, a lousy prison could make an ass of me.

OMNES A nasty plot.

JACK DAPPER Ay: as though a counter, which is a park  
 in which all the wild beasts of the city run head by  
 head, could tame me.

*Enter the* LORD NOLAND

MOLL Yonder comes my Lord Noland. **50**

OMNES Save you, my lord.

LORD NOLAND Well met, gentlemen all: good Sir

19 shovel-board shilling: 'shovel-board' (or shuffleboard) was  
 a game resembling shove-halfpenny, in which coins were  
 knocked along a highly polished board into compartments  
 at the end; the coins most commonly used were shillings

21 garbage: a) refuse (with play on 'Ralph'/raff, meaning  
 refuse); b) cant term for takings from theft

24 hail-fellow: intimate  
 to: in

26 whistled . . . off: dismissed, sent off (from falconry)

28 hit . . . teeth: mock me

29-30 painted . . . head: aldermen frequently had ostentatious  
 tombs with painted effigies. A death's head was often  
 placed on the tomb as a *memento mori*

36 knights . . . places: a reversal of squires' usual ceremonial  
 positions on the outside of the knights whom they served

39-40 boot-halers: highwaymen, freebooter

catchpoles: see III.i.43n

42 handkercher: common form of 'handkerchief'; these were  
 often highly decorated

43 counter: see III.iii.80n

355 furnish out: complete

1 Jack: a generic name for a man (here, Moll in men's  
 clothing)

2-3 Meg of Westminster: a cross-dressing heroine rather  
 similar to Moll, whose exploits are recounted in *The Life  
 and Pranks of Long Meg of Westminster* (1582); a play about  
 her (now lost) was acted in 1594-5, which may still have  
 been in the repertory at the time of *The Roaring Girl*, and  
 she appears in the anti-masque of Jonson's *The Fortunate  
 Isles* (1625)

4 Poultry puttocks: i.e. officers of the Poultry Counter; see  
 III.iii.114

6 the forlorn hope: originally a picked body of men,  
 detached to the front to lead the attack; used figuratively  
 of any group in a desperate condition

10 Uds so: see III.ii.163n

12 mittimus: a warrant from a Justice of the Peace ordering  
 the person named to be kept in custody until delivered to  
 a court of law; from Latin: 'we send'

14 line: a train (see I. 15) or fuse of gunpowder which burns  
 from one end to the other; used to detonate a bomb,  
 mine etc.

17 linstock: a staff, similar to a musket rest, for holding a  
 gunner's match

18 captain of the galley-foist: Mulholland identifies this as 'a  
 term of contempt'. A 'galley-foist' was a state barge,  
 especially that of the Lord Mayor of London used on  
 state occasions

Beauteous Ganymede, Sir Thomas Long. And how does Master Dapper?

JACK DAPPER Thanks, my lord.

MOLL No tobacco, my lord?

LORD NOLAND No, 'faith, Jack.

JACK DAPPER My Lord Noland, will you go to Pimlico with us? We are making a boon voyage to that nappy land of spice-cakes. **60**

LORD NOLAND Here's such a merry ging, I could find in my heart to sail to the world's end with such company; come, gentlemen, let's on.

JACK DAPPER Here's most amorous weather, my lord.

OMNES Amorous weather? *They walk*

JACK DAPPER Is not amorous a good word?

*Enter TRAPDOOR like a poor soldier with a patch o'er one eye, and TEARCAT with him, all tatters*

TRAPDOOR Shall we set upon the infantry, these troops of foot? Zounds, yonder comes Moll, my whorish master and mistress; would I had her kidneys between my teeth. **70**

TEARCAT I had rather have a cow-heel.

TRAPDOOR Zounds, I am so patched up, she cannot discover me: we'll on.

TEARCAT Alla corago then.

TRAPDOOR Good your honours and worships, enlarge the ears of commiseration, and let the sound of a hoarse military organ-pipe penetrate your pitiful bowels to extract out of them so many small drops of silver as may give a hard straw-bed lodging to a couple of maimed soldiers. **80**

JACK DAPPER Where are you maimed?

TEARCAT In both our nether limbs.

MOLL Come, come, Dapper, let's give 'em something: 'las poor men, what money have you? By my troth, I love a soldier with my soul.

SIR BEAUTEOUS Stay, stay, where have you served?

SIR THOMAS In any part of the Low Countries?

TRAPDOOR Not in the Low Countries, if it please your manhood, but in Hungary against the Turk at the siege of Belgrade. **90**

58 Pimlico: see IV.ii.16n  
 59 boon voyage: anglicisation of 'bon voyage': happy journey  
 nappy: heady, strong (usually of liquor)  
 61 ging: company  
 62 the world's end: several taverns at some distance from London were so named  
 71 cow-heel: the foot of a cow stewed to form a jelly  
 74 Alla corago: corruption of Italian *coraggio* (courage)  
 78 bowels: taken to be the seat of compassion or pity  
 87 Low Countries: with possible quibble; see II.i.241-5n  
 89-90 Hungary . . . Belgrade: an impossibility: Belgrade, 'the capital of Serbia . . . was held by the Hungarians from 1086 to 1522, when it was taken by the Turkish Sultan Solymán' (quoted in Mulholland)

LORD NOLAND Who served there with you, sirrah?

TRAPDOOR Many Hungarians, Moldavians, Valachians, and Transylvanians, with some Slavonians; and retiring home, sir, the Venetian galleys took us prisoners, yet freed us, and suffered us to beg up and down the country.

JACK DAPPER You have ambled all over Italy then?

TRAPDOOR Oh sir, from Venice to Roma, Vecchio, Bononia, Romania, Bologna, Modena, Piacenza, and Toscana with all her cities, as Pistoia, Valteria, Mountepulchena, Arezzo, with the Siennesis, and diverse others. **102**

MOLL Mere rogues, put spurs to 'em once more.

JACK DAPPER Thou look'st like a strange creature, a fat butter-box, yet speak'st English. What art thou?

TEARCAT *Ick, mine Here? Ick bin den ruffling Tearcat, den brave Soldado, ick bin dorick all Dutchlant gueresen: der Shellum das meere ine Beasa ine Woert gaeb. Ick slaag um strookes on tom Cop: dastick den hundred touzun Divell halle, frolick mine Here.* **110**

SIR BEAUTEOUS Here, here, let's be rid of their jobbering.

MOLL Not a cross, Sir Beauteous. You base rogues, I have taken measure of you better than a tailor can, and I'll fit you as you, monster with one eye, have fitted me.

TRAPDOOR Your worship will not abuse a soldier.

MOLL Soldier? Thou deservest to be hanged up by that tongue which dishonours so noble a profession: soldier, you skeldering varlet? Hold, stand, there should be a trapdoor hereabouts. *Pulls off his patch*

TRAPDOOR The balls of these glaziers of mine, mine eyes, shall be shot up and down in any hot piece of service for my invincible mistress. **123**

JACK DAPPER I did not think there had been such

92-4 Moldavians . . . Slavonians: i.e. soldiers from the regions under Hungarian rule  
 98-101 Vecchio . . . Siennesis: Vecchio was Civitavecchia (the port of Rome); Bononia and Bologna were the same place, Bologna; Romania was Romagna; Valteria was Volterra; Mountepulchena was Montepulciano. 'Moll recognises that this is no proper journey but a string of names picked up at hearsay' (Cook)  
 105 butter-box: contemptuous term for a Dutchman  
 106-10 *Ick . . . Here: spelt as in Q, this is a phonetically rendered piece of bastard Dutch, whose meaning is roughly as follows: 'I, my lord? I am the ruffling Tearcat, the brave soldier, I have travelled through all Dutchland: [he is] the greater scoundrel who gives an angry word. I beat him directly on the head, that you take out a hundred thousand devils, [be] merry, sir' (Mulholland's translation). For 'ruffling', see l. 162 below*  
 112 jobbering: jabbering  
 113 cross: a coin  
 115 monster . . . eye: a reference to Trapdoor's eyepatch  
 119 skeldering: begging, sponging, swindling  
 121 glaziers: cant term for eyes

knavery in black patches as now I see.  
 MOLL Oh sir, he hath been brought up in the Isle of Dogs, and can both fawn like a spaniel and bite like a mastiff, as he finds occasion.  
 LORD NOLAND What are you, sirrah? A bird of this feather too? **130**  
 TEARCAT A man beaten from the wars, sir.  
 SIR THOMAS I think so, for you never stood to fight.  
 JACK DAPPER What's thy name, fellow soldier?  
 TEARCAT I am called by those that have seen my valour, Tearcat.  
 OMNES Tearcat?  
 MOLL A mere whip-jack, and that is, in the commonwealth of rogues, a slave that can talk of sea-fight, name all your chief pirates, discover more countries to you than either the Dutch, Spanish, French, or English ever found out, yet indeed all his service is by land, and that is to rob a fair, or some such venturous exploit. Tearcat—foot sirrah, I have your name, now I remember me, in my book of horners: horns for the thumb, you know how. **145**  
 TEARCAT No indeed, Captain Moll (for I know you by sight), I am no such nipping Christian, but a maunderer upon the pad, I confess; and meeting with honest Trapdoor here, whom you had cashiered from bearing arms, out at elbows under your colours, I instructed him in the rudiments of roguery, and by my map made him sail over any country you can name, so that now he can maunder better than myself. **153**  
 JACK DAPPER So then, Trapdoor, thou art turned soldier now.  
 TRAPDOOR Alas sir, now there's no wars, 'tis the safest course of life I could take.  
 MOLL I hope then you can cant, for by your cudgels, you, sirrah, are an upright man.

126–7 the Isle of Dogs: the peninsula on the north bank of the Thames opposite Greenwich; by this time, a refuge for debtors and criminals  
 137 whip-jack: a vagabond who pretends to be a distressed sailor  
 145 horns . . . thumb: a horn thimble was used by cutpurses to protect the thumb from the blade of the knife when cutting purse-strings; hence cutpurses were known as 'horn-thumbs'  
 147 nipping: thieving  
 148 maunderer . . . pad: beggar on the highway  
 153 maunder: beg  
 158 cant: speak in the specialist slang of vagabonds and thieves  
 143 upright man: Dekker ranks the 'upright man' first in the hierarchy of rogues: he 'is a sturdy big-boned knave, that never walks but (like a commander) with a short truncheon in his hand, which he calls his filchman. At markets, fairs, and other meetings his voice among beggars is of the same sound that a constable's is of, it is not to be controlled' (Dekker, *The Bellman of London*, 1608); see too 'ruffler', l. 162 below

TRAPDOOR As any walks the highway, I assure you. **160**  
 MOLL And Tearcat, what are you? A wild rogue, an angler, or a ruffler?  
 TEARCAT Brother to this upright man, flesh and blood, ruffling Tearcat is my name, and a ruffler is my style, my title, my profession.  
 MOLL Sirrah, where's your doxy? Halt not with me.  
 OMNES Doxy, Moll, what's that?  
 MOLL His wench. **168**  
 TRAPDOOR My doxy? I have, by the solomon, a doxy, that carries a kinchin mort in her slate at her back, besides my dell and my dainty wild dell, with all whom I'll tumble this next darkmans in the strommel, and drink ben booze, and eat a fat grunting cheat, a cackling cheat, and a quacking cheat.  
 JACK DAPPER Here's old cheating.  
 TRAPDOOR My doxy stays for me in a boozing ken, brave captain.

161 wild rogue: 'one that is born a rogue . . . begotten in barn or bushes, and from his infancy traded up in treachery . . . neither so stout or hardy as an upright man' (Thomas Harman, *A Caveat for Common Coursitors*, 1566)  
 162 angler: 'a limb of an upright man . . . in the day time, they beg from house to house, not so much for relief, as to spy what lies fit for their nets, which in the night following they fish for. The rod they angle with is a staff of five or six foot in length . . . into which . . . they put an iron hook . . . they angle at windows about midnight' (Dekker, *Bellman*)  
 ruffler: ranked second by Dekker in his hierarchy of rogues: 'the ruffler and the upright-man are so like in conditions, that you would swear them brothers: they walk with cudgels alike; they profess arms alike . . . and will swear they lost their limbs in their country's quarrel, when either they are lame by diseases, or have been mangled in some drunken quarrel. These commonly are fellows that have stood aloof in the wars, and whilst others fought, they took their heels and ran away' (Dekker, *Bellman*)  
 166 doxy: whore  
 Halt not: don't vacillate, play false (playing on Trapdoor's limp)  
 169 solomon: cant equivalent to 'the mass'  
 170 kinchin mort . . . slate: 'girls of a year or two old, which the 'morts' (their mothers) carry at their backs in their slates (which in the canting-tongue are sheets)' (Dekker, *Bellman*)  
 dell: 'a young wench, ripe for the act of generation, but as yet not spoiled of her maidenhead. These dells are reserved as dishes for the upright-men, for none but they must have the first taste of them' (Dekker, *Bellman*)  
 171 wild dell: a dell born to the position: 'those such as are born or begotten under a hedge' (Dekker, *Bellman*)  
 172–5 I'll tumble . . . cheat: i.e. I'll tumble this next night in the straw, and drink good booze, and eat a fat pig, a capon, and a duck. 'Cheat' was cant for 'thing'  
 176 old: fine, rare

MOLL He says his wench stays for him in an alehouse.  
You are no pure rogues. 180

TEARCAT Pure rogues? No, we scorn to be pure rogues,  
but if you come to our lib ken, or our stalling ken,  
you shall find neither him nor me a queer cuffin.

MOLL So sir, no churl of you.

TEARCAT No, but a ben cove, a brave cove, a gentry  
cuffin.

LORD NOLAND Call you this canting?

JACK DAPPER Zounds, I'll give a schoolmaster half a  
crown a week and teach me this pedlar's French.

TRAPDOOR Do but stroll, sir, half a harvest with us, sir,  
and you shall gabble your bellyfull. 191

MOLL Come you rogue, cant with me.

SIR THOMAS Well said, Moll; cant with her, sirrah, and  
you shall have money, else not a penny.

TRAPDOOR I'll have a bout if she please.

MOLL Come on sirrah.

TRAPDOOR Ben mort, shall you and I heave a booth,  
mill a ken, or nip a bung? And then we'll couch a  
hogshead under the ruffmans, and there you shall  
wap with me, and I'll niggle with you. 200

MOLL Out, you damned impudent rascal.

TRAPDOOR Cut benar whids, and hold your fables  
and your stamps.

LORD NOLAND Nay, nay, Moll, why art thou angry?

What was his gibberish?

MOLL Marry, this, my Lord, says he: Ben mort (good  
wench), shall you and I heave a booth, mill a ken, or  
nip a bung? Shall you and I rob a house, or cut a  
purse?

OMNES Very good. 210

MOLL And then we'll couch a hogshead under the  
ruffmans: and then we'll lie under a hedge.

TRAPDOOR That was my desire, captain, as 'tis fit a  
soldier should lie.

MOLL And there you shall wap with me, and I'll niggle  
with you,— and that's all.

SIR BEAUTEOUS Nay, nay, Moll, what's that wap?

180 pure rogues: Bullen reads this as ironical, Cook reads  
'pure' as 'sexually pure or chaste', and Mulholland as  
'thorough' (because so far they have confessed only to  
begging)

182 lib ken: place to sleep  
stalling ken: house for receiving stolen goods

183 queer cuffin: 'a churl or a naughty man' (Dekker,  
*Lanthorn and Candlelight*, 1608)

184 of: in the person of

185 ben cove: 'a good fellow' (Dekker, *Lanthorn*)  
gentry cuffin: 'a gentleman' (Dekker, *Lanthorn*)

189 pedlar's French: cant

197 heave a booth: rob a booth (i.e. at a fair)

198 mill a ken: rob a house

202-3 Cut . . . stamps: speak better words, and hold your  
hands and your legs

215 wap . . . niggle: cant terms for 'copulate'

JACK DAPPER Nay teach me what niggling is, I'd fain be  
niggling.

MOLL Wapping and niggling is all one, the rogue my  
man can tell you. 221

TRAPDOOR 'Tis fadoodling, if it please you.

SIR BEAUTEOUS This is excellent; one fit more, good  
Moll.

MOLL Come you rogue, sing with me.

THE SONG

*A gage of ben rom-booze  
In a boozing ken of Rom-ville*

TEARCAT *Is benar than a caster,  
Peck, pennam, lap or popler,  
Which we mill in deuse a vill.* 230

BOTH *Oh I would lib all the lightmans,  
Oh I would lib all the darkmans,  
By the solomon, under the ruffmans,  
By the solomon, in the hartmans.*

TEARCAT *And scour the queer cramp-ring,  
And couch till a palliard docked my dell,  
So my boozy nab might skew rom-booze well.*

BOTH *Avast to the pad, let us bing,  
Avast to the pad, let us bing.*

OMNES Fine knaves, i'faith. 240

JACK DAPPER The grating of ten new cartwheels, and  
the grunting of five hundred hogs coming from  
Romford market, cannot make a worse noise than  
this canting language does in my ears; pray, my Lord  
Noland, let's give these soldiers their pay.

SIR BEAUTEOUS Agreed, and let them march.

LORD NOLAND Here, Moll.

MOLL Now I see that you are stalled to the rogue, and  
are not ashamed of your professions, look you: my

222 fadoodling: euphemism for 'copulating'

223 fit: bout, strain

SP Tearcat's speech prefixes are in Q; others attributed by eds  
226-39 The song: 'A quart of good wine in an ale-house of  
London is better than a cloak, meat, bread, butter-milk  
(or whey), or porridge, which we steal in the country. O  
I would lie all the day, O I would lie all the night, by the  
mass, under the woods (or bushes), by the mass, in the  
stocks, and wear bolts (or fetters), and lie till a palliard  
lay with my wench, so my drunken head might quaff  
wine well. Avast to the highway, let us hence, &c.'  
(Dyce, quoted in Mulholland); see Moll's paraphrase at  
ll. 269-79

235 *cramp-ring*: handcuffs

236 *palliard*: a tramp or beggar: 'he that goeth in a patched  
coat' (John Awdeley, *The Fraternity of Vagabonds*, 1561);  
'to draw pity from men . . . will they in one night poison  
their leg, be it never so sound, and raise a blister, which  
at their pleasure they can take off again' (Dekker,  
*Bellman*)

243 Romford market: a famous hog-market was held in  
Romford in Essex every Tuesday

- Lord Noland here and these gentlemen bestows upon you two, two bordes and a half, that's two shillings sixpence. 252
- TRAPDOOR Thanks to your lordship.
- TEARCAT Thanks, heroical captain.
- MOLL Away.
- TRAPDOOR We shall cut ben whids of your masters and mistress-ship, wheresoever we come.
- MOLL You'll maintain, sirrah, the old justice's plot to his face?
- TRAPDOOR Else trine me on the cheats: hang me. 260
- MOLL Be sure you meet me there.
- TRAPDOOR Without any more maundering I'll do't: follow, brave Tearcat.
- TEARCAT *I prae, sequor*; let us go, mouse.  
*Exeunt they two, manet the rest*
- LORD NOLAND Moll, what was in that canting song?
- MOLL Troth my Lord, only a praise of good drink, the only milk which these wild beasts love to suck, and thus it was:
- A rich cup of wine,  
Oh it is juice divine,  
More wholesome for the head  
Than meat, drink, or bread;  
To fill my drunken pate  
With that, I'd sit up late,  
By the heels would I lie,  
Under a lousy hedge die,  
Let a slave have a pull  
At my whore, so I be full  
Of that precious liquor*
- and a parcel of such stuff, my Lord, not worth the opening. 270
- Enter a CUTPURSE very gallant, with four or five men after him, one with a wand*
- LORD NOLAND What gallant comes yonder?
- SIR THOMAS Mass, I think I know him; 'tis one of Cumberland.
- I CUTPURSE Shall we venture to shuffle in amongst yon heap of gallants, and strike?
- 2 CUTPURSE 'Tis a question whether there be any silver shells amongst them, for all their satin outsides.
- OMNES (CUTPURSES) Let's try.
- 
- 251 bordes: shillings
- 256 cut ben whids: speak good words
- 260 trine . . . cheats: hang me on the gallows
- 262 maundering: talking; perhaps with reference to cant sense of 'begging'
- 264 *I prae, sequor*: go before, I follow
- SD *manet*: remains
- SD *gallant*: finely dressed
- wand*: a light walking stick
- 286 strike: pick a pocket or cut a purse
- 288 shells: money
- MOLL Pox on him, a gallant? Shadow me, I know him: 'tis one that cumpers the land indeed; if he swim near to the shore of any of your pockets, look to your purses. 293
- OMNES Is't possible?
- MOLL This brave fellow is no better than a foist.
- OMNES Foist, what's that?
- MOLL A diver with two fingers, a pickpocket; all his train study the figging-law, that's to say cutting of purses and foisting. One of them is a nip; I took him once i'the twopenny gallery at the Fortune; then there's a cloyer, or snap, that dogs any new brother in that trade, and snaps will have half in any booty. He with the wand is both a stale, whose office is to face a man i'the streets, whilst shells are drawn by another, and then with his black conjuring rod in his hand, he, by the nimbleness of his eye and juggling stick, will, in cheaping a piece of plate at a goldsmith's stall, make four or five rings mount from the top of his caduceus, and as if it were at leap-frog, they skip into his hand presently. 310
- 2 CUTPURSE Zounds, we are smoked.
- OMNES (CUTPURSES) Ha?
- 2 CUTPURSE We are boiled, pox on her; see Moll, the roaring drab.
- I CUTPURSE All the diseases of sixteen hospitals boil her! Away.
- MOLL Bless you, sir.
- I CUTPURSE And you, good sir.
- MOLL Dost not ken me, man?
- I CUTPURSE No, trust me, sir. 320
- MOLL Heart, there's a knight to whom I'm bound for many favours lost his purse at the last new play i'the Swan, seven angels in't: make it good, you're best; do you see? No more.
- I CUTPURSE A synagogue shall be called, Mistress Mary; disgrace me not; pacus palabros, I will conjure for you; farewell. *Exeunt CUTPURSES*
- MOLL Did not I tell you, my lord?
- LORD NOLAND I wonder how thou camest to the knowledge of these nasty villains. 330
- 
- 299 nip: cutpurse
- 303 stale: a decoy
- 307 cheaping: bargaining for
- 309 caduceus: either the cutpurse's wand, used to hook the rings, or the baton on which the goldsmith displayed the rings
- 311, 313 smoked . . . boiled: 'the spying of this villainy is called smoking or boiling' (Dekker, *Bellman*)
- 314 drab: whore
- 323 Swan: theatre on the south bank of the Thames near the Globe
- 325 synagogue: an assembly of thieves
- 326 pacus palabros: approximation of Spanish *pocas palabras* meaning 'few words'

SIR THOMAS And why do the foul mouths of the world call thee Moll Cutpurse? A name, methinks, damned and odious.

MOLL Dare any step forth to my face and say, 'I have ta'en thee doing so, Moll'? I must confess, In younger days, when I was apt to stray, I have sat amongst such adders; seen their stings, As any here might, and in full playhouses Watched their quick-diving hands, to bring to shame Such rogues, and in that stream met an ill name. 340 When next, my lord, you spy any one of those, So he be in his art a scholar, question him, Tempt him with gold to open the large book Of his close villainies; and you yourself shall cant Better than poor Moll can, and know more laws Of cheaters, lifters, nips, foists, puggards, curbers, With all the devil's black guard, than it is fit Should be discovered to a noble wit. I know they have their orders, offices, Circuits and circles, unto which they are bound, 350 To raise their own damnation in.

JACK DAPPER How dost thou know it?

MOLL As you do: I show it you, they to me show it. Suppose, my lord, you were in Venice.

LORD NOLAND Well.

MOLL If some Italian pander there would tell All the close tricks of courtesans, would not you Harken to such a fellow?

LORD NOLAND Yes.

MOLL And here, Being come from Venice, to a friend most dear That were to travel thither, you would proclaim Your knowledge in those villainies, to save Your friend from their quick danger: must you have A black ill name, because ill things you know? 361 Good troth my lord, I am made Moll Cutpurse so. How many are whores in small ruffs and still looks! How many chaste, whose names fill slander's books! Were all men cuckolds, whom gallants in their scorns Call so, we should not walk for goring horns. Perhaps for my mad going some reprove me; I please myself, and care not else who loves me.

OMNES A brave mind, Moll, i'faith.

SIR THOMAS Come my Lord, shall's to the ordinary?

LORD NOLAND Ay, 'tis noon sure. 371

MOLL Good my lord, let not my name condemn me to

- 346 cheaters: or fingerers, who won money by false dice  
lifters: thieves  
nips, foists: see above, ll. 297, 299n  
puggards: probably 'thieves'; this is the only recorded usage  
curbers: thieves who hook goods out of windows  
347 black guard: a guard of attendants, black in person, dress, or character  
355 close: secret

you or to the world; a fencer I hope may be called a coward: is he so for that? If all that have ill names in London were to be whipped, and to pay but twelpence apiece to the beadle, I would rather have his office than a constable's.

JACK DAPPER So would I, Captain Moll: 'twere a sweet tickling office, i'faith.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene ii

*Enter SIR ALEXANDER WENGRAVE, GOSHAWK and GREENWIT, and others*

SIR ALEXANDER My son marry a thief, that impudent girl,

Whom all the world stick their worst eyes upon?

GREENWIT How will your care prevent it?

GOSHAWK 'Tis impossible.

They marry close, they're gone, but none knows whither.

SIR ALEXANDER Oh gentlemen, when has a father's heart-strings

Held out so long from breaking?

*Enter a SERVANT*

Now what news, sir?

SERVANT They were met upo'th'water an hour since, sir,

Putting in towards the Sluice.

SIR ALEXANDER The Sluice? Come gentlemen, 'Tis Lambeth works against us. *Exit SERVANT*

GREENWIT And that Lambeth Joins more mad matches than your six wet towns 10 'Twixt that and Windsor Bridge, where fares lie soaking.

SIR ALEXANDER Delay no time, sweet gentlemen: to Blackfriars,

We'll take a pair of oars and make after 'em.

*Enter TRAPDOOR*

TRAPDOOR Your son, and that bold masculine ramp

359 tickling: diverting

4 close: secretly

8 the Sluice: an embankment on the Thames built to protect Lambeth from flooding; it was used as a landing place. Perhaps with pun on 'sluice' meaning copulate

9 Lambeth: district on the south side of the Thames, and notorious for its thieves and prostitutes

10 six wet towns: i.e. riverside towns; perhaps Fulham, Richmond, Kingston, Hampton, Chertsey and Staines  
11 where . . . soaking: 'the whole phrase suggests the use of the riverside towns for sexual excursions' (Cook)

12 Blackfriars: Blackfriars Stairs was a landing stage on the north side of the Thames

14 ramp: see III.iii.8n

My mistress, are landed now at Tower.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Heyday, at Tower?  
 TRAPDOOR I heard it now reported. *Exit*  
 SIR ALEXANDER Which way, gentlemen,  
 Shall I bestow my care? I'm drawn in pieces  
 Betwixt deceit and shame.

*Enter SIR GUY FITZALLARD*

SIR GUY Sir Alexander,  
 You're well met, and most rightly served;  
 My daughter was a scorn to you.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Say not so, sir. 20  
 SIR GUY A very abject she, poor gentlewoman.  
 Your house has been dishonoured. Give you joy, sir,  
 Of your son's gaskin-bride; you'll be a grandfather  
 shortly  
 To a fine crew of roaring sons and daughters:  
 'Twill help to stock the suburbs passing well, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Oh play not with the miseries of my  
 heart.  
 Wounds should be dressed and healed, not vexed, or  
 left  
 Wide open, to the anguish of the patient,  
 And scornful air let in: rather let pity  
 And advice charitably help to refresh 'em. 30  
 SIR GUY Who'd place his charity so unworthily,  
 Like one that gives alms to a cursing beggar?  
 Had I but found one spark of goodness in you  
 Toward my deserving child, which then grew fond  
 Of your son's virtues, I had eased you now.  
 But I perceive both fire of youth and goodness  
 Are raked up in the ashes of your age,  
 Else no such shame should have come near your  
 house,  
 Nor such ignoble sorrow touch your heart.  
 SIR ALEXANDER If not for worth, for pity's sake assist  
 me. 40  
 GREENWIT You urge a thing past sense; how can he  
 help you?  
 All his assistance is as frail as ours,  
 Full as uncertain where's the place that holds 'em.  
 One brings us water-news; then comes another  
 With a full-charged mouth, like a culverin's voice,  
 And he reports the Tower: whose sounds are truest?  
 GOSHAWK In vain you flatter him. Sir Alexander—

SIR GUY I flatter him? Gentlemen, you wrong me  
 grossly.  
 GREENWIT He does it well i'faith.  
 SIR GUY Both news are false,  
 Of Tower or water: they took no such way yet. 50  
 SIR ALEXANDER Oh strange: hear you this, gentlemen,  
 yet more plunges?  
 SIR GUY They're nearer than you think for, yet more  
 close  
 Than if they were further off.  
 SIR ALEXANDER How am I lost  
 In these distractions?  
 SIR GUY For your speeches, gentlemen,  
 In taxing me for rashness, 'fore you all  
 I will engage my state to half his wealth,  
 Nay to his son's revenues, which are less,  
 And yet nothing at all till they come from him,  
 That I could (if my will stuck to my power)  
 Prevent this marriage yet, nay banish her 60  
 Forever from his thoughts, much more his arms.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Slack not this goodness, though you  
 heap upon me  
 Mountains of malice and revenge hereafter:  
 I'd willingly resign up half my state to him,  
 So he would marry the meanest drudge I hire.  
 GREENWIT He talks impossibilities, and you believe  
 'em.  
 SIR GUY I talk no more than I know how to finish,  
 My fortunes else are his that dares stake with me.  
 The poor young gentleman I love and pity,  
 And to keep shame from him (because the spring 70  
 Of his affection was my daughter's first,  
 Till his frown blasted all), do but estate him  
 In those possessions which your love and care  
 Once pointed out for him, that he may have room  
 To entertain fortunes of noble birth,  
 Where now his desperate wants casts him upon her;  
 And if I do not, for his own sake chiefly,  
 Rid him of this disease that now grows on him,  
 I'll forfeit my whole state, before these gentlemen.  
 GREENWIT Troth but you shall not undertake such  
 matches; 80  
 We'll persuade so much with you.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Here's my ring,  
 He will believe this token: 'fore these gentlemen

23 gaskin-bride: i.e. a bride wearing gaskins or loose breeches

37 raked up: smothered

45 culverin: a large cannon

47 In vain . . . Alexander—: we follow Bullen and Mulholland's punctuation here (in Q, there is no punctuation after 'him'), in which Greenwit addresses first Sir Guy, and then Sir Alexander, at which point Sir Guy interrupts  
 flatter: give hope to, on insufficient grounds

49 He . . . i'faith: here and at l. 92, Greenwit comments on the impact of Sir Guy's words

51 plunges: dilemmas

52 think for: suppose

56 I will . . . wealth: I will pledge my estate to the value of half of Sir Alexander's

59 if . . . power: 'if I would do what I could' (Cook)

72 his: i.e. Sir Alexander's

76 her: i.e. Moll

81 persuade: plead



I will confirm it fully: all those lands  
 My first love 'lotted him, he shall straight possess  
 In that refusal.  
 SIR GUY If I change it not,  
 Change me into a beggar.  
 GREENWIT Are you mad, sir?  
 SIR GUY 'Tis done.  
 GOSHAWK Will you undo yourself by doing,  
 And show a prodigal trick in your old days?  
 SIR ALEXANDER 'Tis a match, gentlemen.  
 SIR GUY Ay, ay, sir, ay.  
 I ask no favour, trust to you for none; 90  
 My hope rests in the goodness of your son. *Exit*  
 GREENWIT He holds it up well yet.  
 GOSHAWK Of an old knight, i'faith.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Cursed be the time I laid his first love  
 barren,  
 Wilfully barren, that before this hour  
 Had sprung forth fruits of comfort and of honour;  
 He loved a virtuous gentlewoman.

*Enter MOLL in male dress*

GOSHAWK Life, here's Moll.  
 GREENWIT Jack?  
 GOSHAWK How dost thou, Jack?  
 MOLL How dost thou, gallant?  
 SIR ALEXANDER Impudence, where's my son?  
 MOLL Weakness, go look him.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Is this your wedding gown?  
 MOLL The man talks monthly:  
 Hot broth and a dark chamber for the knight; 101  
 I see he'll be stark mad at our next meeting. *Exit*  
 GOSHAWK Why sir, take comfort now, there's no such  
 matter.  
 No priest will marry her, sir, for a woman  
 Whiles that shape's on, and it was never known  
 Two men were married and conjoined in one:  
 Your son hath made some shift to love another.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Whate'er she be, she has my blessing  
 with her,  
 May they be rich and fruitful, and receive  
 Like comfort to their issue as I take 110  
 In them. Has pleased me now: marrying not this,  
 Through a whole world he could not choose amiss.  
 GREENWIT Glad you're so penitent for your former sin,  
 sir.  
 GOSHAWK Say he should take a wench with her smock-  
 dowry,

84 my first love: i.e. my love originally

85 refusal: i.e. of Moll

92 Of: characteristic of

100 monthly: madly, as if under the influence of the moon

101 Hot . . . chamber: traditional treatments for insanity

114 smock-dowry: i.e. no dowry but her smock

No portion with her but her lips and arms?  
 SIR ALEXANDER Why, who thrive better, sir? They  
 have most blessing,  
 Though other have more wealth, and least repent:  
 Many that want most know the most content.  
 GREENWIT Say he should marry a kind youthful sinner?  
 SIR ALEXANDER Age will quench that; any offence but  
 theft 120  
 And drunkenness, nothing but death can wipe away;  
 Their sins are green even when their heads are grey.  
 Nay, I despair not now, my heart's cheered,  
 gentlemen,  
 No face can come unfortunately to me.

*Enter a SERVANT*

Now, sir, your news?  
 SERVANT Your son with his fair bride  
 Is near at hand.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Fair may their fortunes be.  
 GREENWIT Now you're resolved, sir, it was never she?  
 SIR ALEXANDER I find it in the music of my heart.

*Enter MOLL in female dress, masked, in SEBASTIAN'S hand,  
 and FITZALLARD*

See where they come.  
 GOSHAWK A proper lusty presence, sir.  
 SIR ALEXANDER Now has he pleased me right. I always  
 counselled him 130  
 To choose a goodly personable creature:  
 Just of her pitch was my first wife his mother.  
 SEBASTIAN Before I dare discover my offence,  
 I kneel for pardon.  
 SIR ALEXANDER My heart gave it thee  
 Before thy tongue could ask it:  
 Rise; thou hast raised my joy to greater height  
 Than to that seat where grief dejected it.  
 Both welcome to my love and care for ever.  
 Hide not my happiness too long: all's pardoned;  
 Here are our friends.—Salute her, gentlemen. 140  
*They unmask her*

OMNES Heart, who's this? Moll!

SIR ALEXANDER Oh my reviving shame! Is't I must live  
 To be struck blind? Be it the work of sorrow,  
 Before age take't in hand.

SIR GUY Darkness and death.  
 Have you deceived me thus? Did I engage  
 My whole estate for this?

SIR ALEXANDER You asked no favour,  
 And you shall find as little; since my comforts  
 Play false with me, I'll be as cruel to thee  
 As grief to fathers' hearts.

119 sinner: i.e. unchaste woman

127 resolved: convinced, persuaded

132 pitch: height

MOLL Why, what's the matter with you,  
'Less too much joy should make your age forgetful?  
Are you too well, too happy?

SIR ALEXANDER With a vengeance. 151  
MOLL Methinks you should be proud of such a daughter,  
As good a man as your son.

SIR ALEXANDER Oh monstrous impudence.  
MOLL You had no note before, an unmarked knight;  
Now all the town will take regard on you,  
And all your enemies fear you for my sake:  
You may pass where you list, through crowds most  
thick,  
And come off bravely with your purse unpicked.  
You do not know the benefits I bring with me:  
No cheat dares work upon you with thumb or knife,  
While you've a roaring girl to your son's wife. 161

SIR ALEXANDER A devil rampant.  
SIR GUY Have you so much charity  
Yet to release me of my last rash bargain,  
And I'll give in your pledge?

SIR ALEXANDER No sir, I stand to't;  
I'll work upon advantage, as all mischiefs  
Do upon me.

SIR GUY Content: bear witness all then,  
His are the lands, and so contention ends.  
Here comes your son's bride, 'twixt two noble friends.

*Enter the LORD NOLAND and SIR BEAUTEOUS GANYMEDE  
with MARY FITZALLARD between them, the CITIZENS and  
their WIVES with them*

MOLL Now are you gulled as you would be: thank me  
for't,  
I'd a forefinger in't.

SEBASTIAN Forgive me, father: 170  
Though there before your eyes my sorrow feigned,  
This still was she for whom true love complained.

SIR ALEXANDER Blessings eternal and the joys of angels  
Begin your peace here, to be signed in heaven!  
How short my sleep of sorrow seems now to me,  
To this eternity of boundless comforts,  
That finds no want but utterance and expression.  
My lord, your office here appears so honourably,  
So full of ancient goodness, grace, and worthiness,  
I never took more joy in sight of man 180  
Than in your comfortable presence now.

LORD NOLAND Nor I more delight in doing grace to  
virtue,

150 'Less: unless

154 unmarked: unremarked, unnoticed

157 list: please

160 cheat: thief

thumb: see V.i.145n

164 And: if

165 work . . . advantage: take advantage of the situation

169 would be: would wish to be

Than in this worthy gentlewoman, your son's bride,  
Noble Fitzallard's daughter, to whose honour  
And modest fame I am a servant vowed;  
So is this knight.

SIR ALEXANDER Your loves make my joys proud.  
—Bring forth those deeds of land my care laid ready,  
*Exit SERVANT, who then re-enters with deeds*  
And which, old knight, thy nobleness may challenge,  
Joined with thy daughter's virtues, whom I prize now  
As dearly as that flesh I call mine own. 190  
Forgive me, worthy gentlewoman, 'twas my  
blindness:

When I rejected thee, I saw thee not;  
Sorrow and wilful rashness grew like films  
Over the eyes of judgment, now so clear  
I see the brightness of thy worth appear.

MARY Duty and love may I deserve in those,  
And all my wishes have a perfect close.

SIR ALEXANDER That tongue can never err, the sound's  
so sweet.

Here, honest son, receive into thy hands  
The keys of wealth, possession of those lands 200  
Which my first care provided, they're thine own;  
Heaven give thee a blessing with 'em; the best joys  
That can in worldly shapes to man betide  
Are fertile lands and a fair fruitful bride,  
Of which I hope thou'rt sped.

SEBASTIAN I hope so too sir.

MOLL Father and son, I ha' done you simple service  
here.

SEBASTIAN For which thou shalt not part, Moll,  
unrequited.

SIR ALEXANDER Thou art a mad girl, and yet I cannot  
now  
Condemn thee.

MOLL Condemn me? Troth and you  
should, sir,

I'd make you seek out one to hang in my room, 210  
I'd give you the slip at gallows, and cozen the people.  
Heard you this jest, my lord?

LORD NOLAND What is it, Jack?

MOLL He was in fear his son would marry me,  
But never dreamt that I would ne'er agree.

LORD NOLAND Why? Thou hadst a suitor once, Jack;  
when wilt marry?

MOLL Who, I, my lord? I'll tell you when, i'faith:

When you shall hear

Gallants void from sergeants' fear,

Honesty and truth unslandered,

Woman manned but never pandered, 220

188 challenge: claim

196 those: i.e. the eyes of judgement

205 sped: provided

209 and: if

Cheats booted but not coached,  
 Vessels older ere they're broached.  
 If my mind be then not varied,  
 Next day following I'll be married.  
 LORD NOLAND This sounds like doomsday.  
 MOLL Then were marriage best,  
 For if I should repent, I were soon at rest.  
 SIR ALEXANDER In troth thou'rt a good wench; I'm  
 sorry now  
 The opinion was so hard I conceived of thee.  
 Some wrongs I've done thee.

Enter TRAPDOOR

TRAPDOOR Is the wind there now?  
 'Tis time for me to kneel and confess first, 230  
 For fear it come too late and my brains feel it.  
 Upon my paws I ask you pardon, mistress.

MOLL Pardon? For what, sir? What has your roguiship  
 done now?

TRAPDOOR I have been from time to time hired to  
 confound you  
 By this old gentleman.

MOLL How?

TRAPDOOR Pray forgive him,  
 But may I counsel you, you should never do't.  
 Many a snare to entrap your worship's life  
 Have I laid privily, chains, watches, jewels,  
 And when he saw nothing could mount you up, 240  
 Four hollow-hearted angels he then gave you,  
 By which he meant to trap you, I to save you.

SIR ALEXANDER To all which, shame and grief in me  
 cry guilty.  
 Forgive me; now I cast the world's eyes from me,  
 And look upon thee freely with mine own,  
 I see the most of many wrongs before thee  
 Cast from the jaws of envy and her people,  
 And nothing foul but that. I'll never more  
 Condemn by common voice, for that's the whore  
 That deceives man's opinion, mocks his trust, 250  
 Cozens his love, and makes his heart unjust.

MOLL Here be the angels, gentlemen; they were given  
 me

As a musician. I pursue no pity:  
 Follow the law: and you can cuckold me, spare not:

221 Cheats . . . coached: 'Moll apparently awaits the time  
 when *cheaters* are allowed the expense of a horse (or  
 simply footwear), but not the extravagance of a coach'  
 (Mulholland)

222 Vessels: i.e. women's bodies

229 Is the wind . . . now?: referring to Sir Alexander's  
 changed attitude to Moll

240 mount you up: i.e. on the gallows

246 before thee: done to thee

254 and . . . cuckold me: if you can get me in a cucking stool  
 (punishment given to women seen as disorderly)

Hang up my viol by me, and I care not.  
 SIR ALEXANDER So far I'm sorry, I'll thrice double 'em  
 To make thy wrongs amends.  
 Come, worthy friends, my honourable lord,  
 Sir Beateous Ganymede, and noble Fitzallard,  
 And you kind gentlewomen, whose sparkling  
 presence 260  
 Are glories set in marriage, beams of society,  
 For all your loves give lustre to my joys:  
 The happiness of this day shall be remembered  
 At the return of every smiling spring:  
 In my time now 'tis born, and may no sadness  
 Sit on the brows of men upon that day,  
 But as I am, so all go pleased away.

Exeunt

## Epilogus

A painter having drawn with curious art  
 The picture of a woman (every part  
 Limned to the life) hung out the piece to sell.  
 People who passed along, viewing it well,  
 Gave several verdicts on it: some dispraised  
 The hair, some said the brows too high were raised,  
 Some hit her o'er the lips, misliked their colour,  
 Some wished her nose were shorter, some the eyes  
 fuller;  
 Others said roses on her cheeks should grow,  
 Swearing they looked too pale, others cried no. 10  
 The workman, still as fault was found, did mend it  
 In hope to please all; but, this work being ended  
 And hung open at stall, it was so vile,  
 So monstrous and so ugly, all men did smile  
 At the poor painter's folly. Such we doubt  
 Is this our comedy: some perhaps do flout  
 The plot, saying 'tis too thin, too weak, too mean;  
 Some for the person will revile the scene,  
 And wonder that a creature of her being  
 Should be the subject of a poet, seeing 20  
 In the world's eye none weighs so light: others look  
 For all those base tricks published in a book

260 gentlewomen: eds (gentlewoman Q); i.e. the citizens'  
 wives

261 beams: sunbeams

Epilogus: probably spoken by Moll

1-15 compare the Epilogue to *A Woman Killed with Kindness*

1 curious: skilful

7 hit her o'er: criticised

15 doubt: suspect

18 person: character (i.e. Moll)

22 a book: apparently a reference to Samuel Rid who wrote

*Martin Mark-All, Beadle of Bridewell; His Defence and*

*Answer to the Bellman of London* (1610) in which he

criticised Dekker's work and his knowledge of thieves'

cant; see Mulholland 1977: 19-20



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# Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling*

First performed 1622

First published 1653

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There is a profound sense of claustrophobia in *The Changeling*, a play that treats space as a metaphor for the relations between reality and appearance, truth and deception, sanity and madness. Indeed, it may be that the resources of the private theatres (The Phoenix in the case of *The Changeling*) may have encouraged the dramatists who wrote for them to experiment with the increasing complexity of the theatre's facilities (doors, artificial lighting and galleries) as symbolic reference points in their unfolding narratives. Certainly, from the outset, there is an ominous sense that the grandeur of Vermandero's castle (a symbol of rank, familial continuity and moral certainty) may actually constitute an 'outward view' for those on its inside, as well as for those viewing it from a distance. As Vermandero remarks:

We use not to give survey  
Of our chief strengths to strangers: our citadels  
Are placed conspicuous to outward view  
On promonts' tops, but within are secrets.  
(I.i.166-9)

This sense of airiness, backed by the forceful symbol of the nearby sea, gives way to passages, dungeons, madhouses, chambers and closets. It is as if the castle, with its 'chief strengths', is turned inside out and upside down by the destructive agents of change and transformation that inhabit it.

A 'changeling' was a child left by fairies as a replacement for one they had stolen (or sometimes the stolen child itself) but, by the time of this play, it had become a broad term for those exhibiting mental anxiety or 'abnormality': thus most critics regard the sub-plot's Antonio (who pretends to be a 'natural fool') as the changeling of the title. However, whilst the madhouse scenes show the comic potential of pretence and disguise, they contextualise the sense of psychological change, either pretended or real, in the main plot. As cruel as it is, the madhouse has a rationale for its regime and a taxonomy of its patients (between idiots and lunatics). Those who work there, or enter disguised, proceed to at least some sense of self-awareness and moral resolution at the end of the play.

Nothing is as clear in the society Vermandero presides over, a world of the sudden change-of-heart and its consequences: the sudden desire of Alsemero for Beatrice; her sudden change of attitude to De Flores (a role which she initially only plays but later cannot discard); and the sudden, almost instinctive, recognition by Vermandero that in order to preserve his authority and name, he must turn from paternalism to pragmatism. Thus the play contains a host of 'changeling' figures, and, as Richard Dutton has remarked, 'the essential attribute of "the changeling" is not that of changing, but that of revealing its true nature, in spite of efforts – conscious or otherwise – to conceal them' (Dutton 1999: xxix).

*The Changeling* can be seen as part of the tradition of revenge plays that includes Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1585) and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1600) yet, by the 1620s, the genre itself had undergone a considerable amount of change, so that the frustrated revenger is no longer necessarily the protagonist. Indeed Tomazo's search for justice for his murdered brother, whilst recognisable as a vehicle for showing the narrowness of Vermandero's judgement (IV.ii.23-32), makes less of an impact upon the audience than the central preoccupation with sexual transgression. The complexity of the system of obscene double-meanings in the madhouse scenes alerts us to a no less complex (and only slightly more decorous) code of language at work between Beatrice and De Flores. Here we observe the plurality of language itself; there is precision in these exchanges, yet the precision is in the choice of vocabulary that signifies in a number of areas of meaning simultaneously. A good example of this is with the words 'serve' and 'service' which continually slide between the realms of sexual desire and servitude, realms that mesh in their fateful pact.

Central to this is a reversal of the codes of conduct that early modern ideological mores set out for women and for servants. Beatrice's transgression is compelling because it is so total: she refuses the authority of her father to inflict an unwelcome but 'suitable' husband upon her; she resigns herself to the fate that will be hers for transgressing the law of God (another father); and she chooses De Flores as accomplice and, ultimately, lover. Her clever manipulation of Alsemero's virginity

test is perhaps the most novel of her transgressions, since it throws into relief both his self-righteous discourse of 'romantic' love and his contemporary sounding belief in chemistry.

As White (1992) has pointed out, the play dramatises a contemporary preoccupation with the power of passion to overwhelm reason. Francis Bacon wrote in *De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum* (1623) that:

Tigers likewise are kept in the stables of the passions, and at times yoked to their chariot; for when passion ceases to go on foot and comes to ride in its chariot, as in celebration of its victory and triumph over reason, then it is cruel, savage and pitiless towards all that withstand or oppose it.

In a play like *The Changeling*, the cultural institutions which attempted to contain these passions (the family, religion and justice) are exposed and severely questioned. Its Catholic Spanish setting might usefully have distanced Middleton and Rowley from censure over its religious scepticism (only Catholic doctrine drives people towards the random fate of the 'barley-break' game). Its ending secures the dominant culture of male authority and new kinships for old, however unsatisfactory this, and the hollow-sounding Epilogue, may seem to a twenty-first-century audience. What we experience in order to reach that conclusion remains eloquent and disturbing to us, and must surely have invited radical disquiet among seventeenth-century audiences. In this, the play is far removed from the smug moralising of its principal source, John Reynolds's *The Triumphs of God's Revenge against the Crying and Execrable Sin of Wilful and Premeditated Murder* (1621).

### Textual note

The copytext for this edition is the quarto of 1653 (referred to in the footnotes to the text as Q). Copies of the quarto are held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the British Library in London and these vary slightly as some of the sheets were corrected during printing. The play was reissued in 1668 with a new title page (by the widow of the original publisher, Humphrey Moseley) but in effect there is only one seventeenth-century edition of the play. The quarto had act divisions but not scene divisions; we have followed the scene structure established by Dyce.

## Further reading

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## Works of related interest

- Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1585)
- William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* (1593)
- William Shakespeare, *Richard III* (1593)
- William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (1595)
- William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1600)
- Thomas Middleton or Cyril Tourneur, *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606)
- George Chapman, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (1610)
- Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611)
- John Webster, *The White Devil* (1612)
- John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614)
- Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women* (1625)
- John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633)

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# The Changeling (1622)

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## Dramatis personae

VERMANDERO, *father to Beatrice*

TOMAZO DE PIRACQUO, *a noble lord*

ALONZO DE PIRACQUO, *his brother, suitor to Beatrice*

ALSEMERO, *a nobleman, afterwards married to Beatrice*

JASPERINO, *his friend*

ALIBIUS, *a jealous doctor*

LOLLIO, *his man*

PEDRO, *friend to Antonio*

ANTONIO, *the changeling*

FRANCISCUS, *the counterfeit madman*

DE FLORES, *servant to Vermandero*

MADMEN

SERVANTS

GENTLEMEN

BEATRICE JOANNA, *daughter to Vermandero*

DIAPHANTA, *her waiting-woman*

ISABELLA, *wife to Alibius*

GENTLEWOMEN

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Dramatis personae: the names of all the characters except Lollio, Pedro, Antonio and Franciscus can be traced to John Reynolds's *The Triumphs of God's Revenge against the Crying and Execrable Sin of Wilful and Premeditated Murder* (1621)

TOMAZO: possibly derived from the 'doubting Thomas' of the Bible (see John 20.25)

ALIBIUS: (Latin) translates as 'he who is elsewhere'

FRANCISCUS: Frenchman (and therefore, in Elizabethan thinking, licentious)

DE FLORES: a) 'deflower'; b) (ironically) 'of the flowers' (Deflores in Q)

BEATRICE JOANNA: Beatrice means 'she who makes happy' and Joanna means 'the Lord's grace' (both ironic)

DIAPHANTA: a) transparent; b) 'the red-hot one' (with sexual overtones)

ISABELLA: 'God has sworn'

## The scene

ALICANT

## Act I, scene i

Enter ALSEMERO

ALSEMERO 'Twas in the temple where I first beheld her,  
And now again the same. What omen yet  
Follows of that? None but imaginary:  
Why should my hopes of fate be timorous?  
The place is holy, so is my intent:  
I love her beauties to the holy purpose,  
And that, methinks, admits comparison  
With man's first creation, the place blest,  
And is his right home back, if he achieve it.  
The church hath first begun our interview,  
And that's the place must join us into one  
So there's beginning, and perfection too.

10

Enter JASPERINO

JASPERINO O sir, are you here? Come, the wind's fair  
with you;

Y'are like to have a swift and pleasant passage.

ALSEMERO Sure y'are deceived, friend; 'tis contrary  
In my best judgement.

JASPERINO What, for Malta?

If you could buy a gale amongst the witches

They could not serve you such a lucky pennyworth

As comes a' God's name.

---

ALICANT: Alicante, a seaport on the east coast of Spain

6 the holy purpose: i.e. marriage

8 the place blest: Eden (the place man lost through disobedience to God but that can be regained through marriage)

10 interview: meeting

12 perfection: wedlock (as the completion of a circle)

14 like: likely

17 If you . . . the witches: referring to the belief that witches could sell winds

18 pennyworth: bargain

19 a' God's name: in God's name, and naturally (as opposed to a bargain struck with witches)



ALSEMERO Even now I observed  
The temple's vane to turn full in my face; 20  
I know it is against me.

JASPERINO Against you?  
Then you know not where you are.

ALSEMERO Not well, indeed.

JASPERINO Are you not well, sir?

ALSEMERO Yes, Jasperino;  
Unless there be some hidden malady  
Within me that I understand not.

JASPERINO And that  
I begin to doubt, sir. I never knew  
Your inclinations to travels at a pause,  
With any cause to hinder it, till now.  
Ashore you were wont to call your servants up,  
And help to trap your horses for the speed; 30  
At sea I have seen you weigh the anchor with 'em,  
Hoist sails for fear to lose the foremost breath,  
Be in continual prayers for fair winds:  
And have you changed your orisons?

ALSEMERO No, friend,  
I keep the same church, same devotion.

JASPERINO Lover I'm sure y'are none, the stoic was  
Found in you long ago; your mother nor  
Best friends, who have set snares of beauty (ay,  
And choice ones, too), could never trap you that way.  
What might be the cause?

ALSEMERO Lord, how violent 40  
Thou art! I was but meditating of  
Somewhat I heard within the temple.

JASPERINO Is this  
Violence? 'Tis but idleness compared  
With your haste yesterday.

ALSEMERO I'm all this while a-going, man.

Enter SERVANTS

JASPERINO Backwards, I think, sir. Look, your servants.  
I SERVANT The seamen call; shall we board your  
trunks?  
ALSEMERO No, not today.

20 The temple's . . . my face: the weather vane ironically and ominously turns against Alsemero, despite the 'fair weather' reported by Jasperino  
26 doubt: fear, suspect  
30 to trap . . . the speed: 'to put harnesses on your horses to increase their speed'  
31 'em: servants (or crew)  
34 orisons: prayers  
35 church, same devotion: manner, outlook (possibly with Beatrice in mind rather than the prayers)  
36 stoic: a person undisturbed by emotion  
38 snares: traps (for animals)  
40 violent: obsessively concerned  
42 Somewhat: something  
47 board: put on board

JASPERINO 'Tis the critical day,  
It seems, and the sign in Aquarius. 50

2 SERVANT (*Aside*) We must not to sea today; this  
smoke will bring forth fire!

ALSEMERO Keep all on shore; I do not know the end,  
Which needs I must do, of an affair in hand  
Ere I can go to sea.

I SERVANT Well, your pleasure.

2 SERVANT (*Aside*) Let him e'en take his leisure too; we  
are safer on land. *Exeunt* SERVANTS

Enter BEATRICE, DIAPHANTA, and SERVANTS. ALSEMERO  
greet BEATRICE and kisses her

JASPERINO (*Aside*) How now! The laws of the Medes  
are changed, sure! Salute a woman? He kisses too.  
Wonderful! Where learnt he this? And does it  
perfectly too; in my conscience, he ne'er rehearsed it  
before. Nay, go on; this will be stranger and better  
news at Valencia than if he had ransomed half  
Greece from the Turk. 65

BEATRICE You are a scholar, sir?

ALSEMERO A weak one, lady.

BEATRICE Which of the sciences is this love you speak  
of?

ALSEMERO From your tongue I take it to be music.

BEATRICE You are skilful in't, can sing at first sight.

ALSEMERO And I have showed you all my skill at once.  
I want more words to express me further, 71  
And must be forced to repetition:  
I love you dearly.

BEATRICE Be better advised, sir.  
Our eyes are sentinels unto our judgements,  
And should give certain judgement what they see;  
But they are rash sometimes, and tell us wonders

49 critical: crucial (in astrology)  
50 Aquarius: the water-carrier; the sun has entered the sign of the zodiac thought to favour sea voyages  
51-2 this smoke . . . forth fire!: from the proverbial expression 'there's no smoke without fire' (fire in this case being Alsemero's sexual passion)  
56 your pleasure: as you please  
59 the laws . . . the Medes: laws that were supposed to be unalterable (see Daniel 6.8)  
60 Salute: greet with a kiss  
62 in my conscience: truthfully, upon my word (colloquial)  
64 Valencia: Alsemero's home, another Spanish port  
64-5 if he . . . the Turk: Greece had been under Turkish rule since 1460  
57 sciences: branches of learning, including the arts  
69 sing at first sight: sight-read music (but also, perhaps, referring to love at first sight)  
71 want: lack  
74-8 Our eyes . . . them blind: Beatrice warns against the irrationality (or 'blindness') that can be caused by 'our eyes' (sexual arousal)

Of common things, which when our judgements find,  
They can then check the eyes, and call them blind.  
ALSEMERO But I am further, lady: yesterday  
Was mine eyes' employment, and hither now 80  
They brought my judgement, where are both agreed.  
Both houses then consenting, 'tis agreed;  
Only there wants the confirmation  
By the hand royal—that is your part, lady.  
BEATRICE O there's one above me, sir. (*Aside*) For five  
days past  
To be recalled! Sure, mine eyes were mistaken:  
This was the man was meant me. That he should come  
So near his time and miss it! 88  
JASPERINO (*Aside*) We might have come by the carriers  
from Valencia, I see, and saved all our sea-provision;  
we are at farthest, sure. Methinks I should do  
something too—I meant to be a venturer in this  
voyage. Yonder's another vessel; I'll board her. If she  
be lawful prize, down goes her top-sail.

*Greets* DIAPHANTA

*Enter* DE FLORES

DE FLORES Lady, your father—  
BEATRICE Is in health, I hope.  
DE FLORES Your eye shall instantly instruct you, lady.  
He's coming hitherward.  
BEATRICE What needed then  
Your duteous preface? I had rather  
He had come unexpected: you must stall  
A good presence with unnecessary blabbing, 100

77 Of: about

78 check: restrain

78–81 But I . . . both agreed: Alesmero says that he is further advanced than the state Beatrice described, having used his eyes yesterday and his judgement today, and finding that the two agree

82–4 Both houses . . . hand royal: 'The metaphor is legislative; both house of parliament (the sense and the intellect) have approved the bill; it now needs only the queen's signature to make it law' (Williams)

85 one above me: her father Vermandero (but also implying that he is god-like in his authority)

85–6 For five . . . be recalled: she wishes the five days of her engagement to Alonzo could be rescinded

89 the carriers: land transport

91 at farthest: a) most distant from our destination;

b) neglectful of our purpose

92 venturer: one who shares business risks and profits

93–4 Yonder's another . . . top-sail: Diaphanta is seen as a ship that can be 'boarded' (with sexual symbolism); if she is 'lawful prize' (single) she will lower her topsail in surrender, as must a vessel at sea that no regulation prohibits from capturing

99 stall: forestall

100 A good presence: i.e. Vermandero  
blabbing: babbling

And how welcome for your part you are  
I'm sure you know.  
DE FLORES (*Aside*) Will't never mend, this scorn,  
One side nor other? Must I be enjoined  
To follow still whilst she flies from me? Well,  
Fates, do your worst; I'll please myself with sight  
Of her, at all opportunities,  
If but to spite her anger. I know she had  
Rather see me dead than living—and yet  
She knows no cause for't but a peevish will.  
ALSEMERO You seemed displeased, lady, on the  
sudden. 110  
BEATRICE Your pardon, sir; 'tis my infirmity.  
Nor can I other reason render you  
Than his or hers, of some particular thing  
They must abandon as a deadly poison  
Which to a thousand other tastes were wholesome.  
Such to mine eyes is that same fellow there,  
The same that report speaks of, the basilisk.  
ALSEMERO This is a frequent frailty in our nature.  
There's scarce a man amongst a thousand found  
But hath his imperfection: one distastes 120  
The scent of roses, which to infinites  
Most pleasing is, and odoriferous;  
One oil, the enemy of poison;  
Another wine, the cheerer of the heart  
And lively refresher of the countenance.  
Indeed this fault, if so it be, is general:  
There's scarce a thing but is both loved and loathed.  
Myself, I must confess, have the same frailty.  
BEATRICE And what may be your poison, sir? I am  
bold with you.  
ALSEMERO What might be your desire perhaps: a cherry.  
BEATRICE I am no enemy to any creature 131  
My memory has but yon gentleman.  
ALSEMERO He does ill to tempt your sight, if he knew it.  
BEATRICE He cannot be ignorant of that, sir:  
103 One side nor other?: whatever I do  
104 still: all the time  
107 to spite her anger: in compensation for frustrated desire  
109 peevish: perverse  
112 render: give  
113 his or hers: 'that which anyone could give'  
114 abandon: reject  
117 report: rumour  
basilisk: a fabulous reptile whose breath and glance were deadly  
120 distastes: has a distaste for  
121 infinites: an infinite number of people (i.e. the vast majority)  
122 odoriferous: fragrant  
123 oil: a laxative (to flush out poison)  
125 countenance: face, demeanour, but here 'outlook' or spirits  
130 a cherry: Alsemoro chooses something considered trivial  
132 yon gentleman: De Flores  
133 tempt: makes trial of

I have not spared to tell him so; and I want  
To help myself, since he's a gentleman  
In good respect with my father, and follows him.  
ALSEMERO He's out of his place then now.

*They talk apart*

JASPERINO I am a mad wag, wench. 139

DIAPHANTA So methinks; but for your comfort I can  
tell you we have a doctor in the city that undertakes  
the cure of such.

JASPERINO Tush, I know what physic is best for the  
state of mine own body.

DIAPHANTA 'Tis scarce a well-governed state, I believe.

JASPERINO I could show thee such a thing with an  
ingredient that we two would compound together,  
and if it did not tame the maddest blood i'th'town for  
two hours after, I'll ne'er profess physic again. 149

DIAPHANTA A little poppy, sir, were good to cause you  
sleep.

JASPERINO Poppy? I'll give thee a pop i'th'lips for that  
first, and begin there (*Kisses her*): poppy is one simple  
indeed, and cuckoo what-you-call't another. I'll  
discover no more now; another time I'll show thee all.

BEATRICE My father, sir.

*Enter VERMANDERO and SERVANTS*

VERMANDERO O Joanna, I came to meet thee.  
Your devotion's ended?

BEATRICE For this time, sir.  
(*Aside*) I shall change my saint, I fear me; I find

135 want: have need

137 respect: repute  
follows him: is one of his retainers

138 out of his place: a) not acting according to his social  
station; b) 'he should not be here'

139 mad wag: "uncontrolled by reason", and specifically  
"sexually infatuated" (Daalder)  
wench: young woman

141 a doctor: i.e. Alibius

143 physic: medicine (but with sexual overtones)

144 state: condition

145 state: a) condition; b) body politic (which should be  
governed more rationally)

146 thing: a) the remedy for the poorly governed state;  
b) copulation (slang)

147 ingredient: mixture of semen and ovaries  
compound: mix (with pestle and mortar, a sexual image)

148 blood: (sexual) passion

150 poppy: opium (made from poppy seeds)  
sleep: could also mean copulate

152 pop i'th'lips: thrust in the lips (with play on the 'lips' of  
the vagina)

154 cuckoo what-you-call't: cuckoo-pintle (wild flower  
shaped like a penis) with play on 'cuckoo' as madness  
discover: reveal

157 devotion: act of worship

158 change my saint: pray to a new 'saint' i.e. Alsemero

A giddy turning in me. (*To VERMANDERO*) Sir, this  
while

I am beholding to this gentleman 160  
Who left his own way to keep me company,  
And in discourse I find him much desirous  
To see your castle. He hath deserved it, sir,  
If ye please to grant it.

VERMANDERO With all my heart, sir.

Yet there's an article between: I must know  
Your country. We use not to give survy  
Of our chief strengths to strangers: our citadels  
Are placed conspicuous to outward view  
On promonts' tops, but within are secrets.

ALSEMERO A Valencian, sir.

VERMANDERO A Valencian? 170

That's native, sir. Of what name, I beseech you?

ALSEMERO Alsemero, sir.

VERMANDERO Alsemero? Not the son  
Of John de Alsemero?

ALSEMERO The same, sir.

VERMANDERO My best love bids you welcome.

BEATRICE (*Aside*) He was wont 180  
To call me so, and then he speaks a most  
Unfeignèd truth.

VERMANDERO O sir, I knew your father;

We two were in acquaintance long ago  
Before our chins were worth Iulan down,  
And so continued till the stamp of time  
Had coined us into silver. Well, he's gone; 180  
A good soldier went with him.

ALSEMERO You went together in that, sir.

VERMANDERO No, by Saint Jaques; I came behind him.  
Yet I have done somewhat too. An unhappy day  
Swallowed him at last at Gibraltar  
In fight with those rebellious Hollanders,

159 giddy turning: a) feeling of dizziness; b) a sensation of  
madness

160 beholding: indebted

165 article between: stipulation, condition

166 use not: are unaccustomed

167 strengths: fortifications

169 promonts: promontories  
secrets: ironic in view of Alsemero's real interest (in  
Beatrice) and what is to unfold later in the play

171 native: i.e. Valencia is in the same region as Alicant (and  
thus no potential enemy)

174-6 He was . . . Unfeignèd truth: Vermandero used to call  
Beatrice 'best love'

178 Iulan: adjective denoting youth (from Iulus Ascanius, the  
son of Aeneas in Virgil's *Aeneid*)

180 coined us into silver: turned us grey

182 went together: were his equal

183 Saint Jacques: St James of Compostela, the patron saint  
of Spain

185 Gibraltar: the Spanish were defeated by the Dutch at the  
Battle of Gibraltar on 25 April 1607

Was it not so?  
**ALSEMERO** Whose death I had revenged,  
 Or followed him in fate, had not the late league  
 Prevented me.  
**VERMANDERO** Ay, ay, 'twas time to breathe.—  
 O Joanna, I should ha' told thee news: **190**  
 I saw Piracquo lately.  
**BEATRICE** (*Aside*) That's ill news.  
**VERMANDERO** He's hot preparing for his day of triumph:  
 Thou must be a bride within this sevensnight.  
**ALSEMERO** (*Aside*) Ha!  
**BEATRICE** Nay, good sir, be not so violent; with speed  
 I cannot render satisfaction  
 Unto the dear companion of my soul,  
 Virginity, whom I thus long have lived with,  
 And part with it so rude and suddenly.  
 Can such friends divide, never to meet again,  
 Without a solemn farewell?  
**VERMANDERO** Tush, tush, there's a toy.  
**ALSEMERO** (*Aside*) I must now part, and never meet  
 again **201**  
 With any joy on earth. (*To VERMANDERO*) Sir, your  
 pardon;  
 My affairs call on me.  
**VERMANDERO** How, sir? By no means;  
 Not changed so soon, I hope. You must see my castle,  
 And her best entertainment, ere we part;  
 I shall think myself unkindly us'd else.  
 Come, come, let's on. I had good hope your stay  
 Had been a while with us in Alicant:  
 I might have bid you to my daughter's wedding.  
**ALSEMERO** (*Aside*) He means to feast me, and poisons  
 me beforehand. **210**  
 (*To VERMANDERO*) I should be dearly glad to be  
 there, sir,  
 Did my occasions suit as I could wish.  
**BEATRICE** I shall be sorry if you be not there  
 When it is done, sir;—but not so suddenly.  
**VERMANDERO** I tell you, sir, the gentleman's complete,  
 A courier and a gallant, enriched  
 With many fair and noble ornaments.

187 had: would have

188 late league: a truce was signed in 1609

189 'twas time to breathe: 'the truce put a pause to hostilities;  
 an English audience would have wished Spain defeated'  
 (Kinney)192 hot: ardent (with sexual overtone)  
 day of triumph: wedding day

200 toy: trifle

210 He means . . . me beforehand: Vermandero invites  
 Alsemero to a feast, but has poisoned him already with  
 the news of the wedding

214 suddenly: soon

215 complete: perfect

216 gallant: accomplished lover

I would not change him, for a son-in-law,  
 For any he in Spain, the proudest he;  
 And we have great ones, that you know.  
**ALSEMERO** He's much  
 Bound to you, sir.  
**VERMANDERO** He shall be bound to me **221**  
 As fast as this tie can hold him; I'll want  
 My will else.  
**BEATRICE** (*Aside*) I shall want mine if you do it.  
**VERMANDERO** But come, by the way I'll tell you more  
 of him.  
**ALSEMERO** (*Aside*) How shall I dare to venture in his  
 castle,  
 When he discharges murderers at the gate?  
 But I must on, for back I cannot go.  
**BEATRICE** (*Aside*) Not this serpent gone yet?  
*Drops a glove*  
**VERMANDERO** Look, girl, thy glove's fall'n.  
 Stay, stay.—De Flores, help a little.  
*Exeunt VERMANDERO, ALSEMERO, JASPERINO, and*  
*SERVANTS*  
**DE FLORES** Here lady. *Offers the glove*  
**BEATRICE** Mischief on your officious forwardness! **230**  
 Who bade you stoop? They touch my hand no more:  
 There, for t'other's sake I part with this—  
*Takes off and throws down the other glove*  
 Take 'em and draw thine own skin off with 'em.  
*Exeunt BEATRICE, DIAPHANTA, and SERVANTS*  
**DE FLORES** Here's a favour come, with a mischief! Now  
 I know  
 She had rather wear my pelt tanned in a pair  
 Of dancing pumps than I should thrust my fingers  
 Into her sockets here. I know she hates me,

219 he: man

221 Bound: a) indebted; b) tied

222 want: not have

223 want mine: lack my desire

226 murderers: small cannon (metaphor for the idea that  
 Alsemero is 'killed' by talking further about Alonso)228 this serpent: i.e. De Flores, as either a venomous reptile  
 (as in the basilisk mentioned at I.i.117) or as the serpent  
 in the Garden of Eden, the tempter of Eve.glove's fall'n: a) as a love token for Alsemero; b) acci-  
 dentally; c) unconsciously (for De Flores) 'prompted by  
 her response to De Flores at a deep sexual level' (Daalder)

229 Stay, stay: spoken to Beatrice

233 draw thine own skin off: a) a reference to De Flores's  
 ugly skin; b) another reference to his serpent-like  
 qualities (as snakes shed their old skins for new ones)

234 favour: love token

mischief: sign of disfavour

235 pelt: skin

236 pumps: shoes

fingers: metaphorically, his penis

237 sockets: the finger-holes of the gloves (but  
 metaphorically her vagina)

Yet cannot choose but love her.  
 No matter: if but to vex her I'll haunt her still;  
 Though I get nothing else, I'll have my will.

240  
*Exit*

## Act I, scene ii

*Enter ALIBIUS and LOLLIO*

ALIBIUS Lollo, I must trust thee with a secret,  
 But thou must keep it.  
 LOLLIO I was ever close to a secret, sir.  
 ALIBIUS The diligence that I have found in thee,  
 The care and industry already past,  
 Assures me of thy good continuance.  
 Lollo, I have a wife.  
 LOLLIO Fie, sir, 'tis too late to keep her secret; she's  
 known to be married all the town and country over.  
 ALIBIUS Thou goest too fast, my Lollo. That  
 knowledge  
 I allow no man can be barred it;  
 But there is a knowledge which is nearer,  
 Deeper and sweeter, Lollo.  
 LOLLIO Well, sir, let us handle that between you and I.  
 ALIBIUS 'Tis that I go about, man. Lollo,  
 My wife is young.  
 LOLLIO So much the worse to be kept secret, sir.  
 ALIBIUS Why, now thou meet'st the substance of the  
 point:  
 I am old, Lollo.  
 LOLLIO No, sir, 'tis I am old Lollo.  
 ALIBIUS Yet why may not this concord and  
 sympathize?  
 Old trees and young plants often grow together,  
 Well enough agreeing.  
 LOLLIO Ay, sir, but the old trees raise themselves  
 higher and broader than the young plants.  
 ALIBIUS Shrewd application! There's the fear, man.

- 239 if but to vex her: even if sexually frustrated, he intends to find satisfaction in harassing her  
 3 close to a secret: a) able to conceal a secret; b) close to a private part (i.e. lustful)  
 8 keep her secret: a) keep her status as a wife secret; b) preserve her private part  
 11 allow: admit  
 12 knowledge: carnal knowledge  
 14 handle: manage (with sexual overtones)  
 15 'Tis that I go about: that is exactly my point  
 18 now thou . . . the point: Alibius thinks Lollo means that it is difficult to keep a young wife concealed; Lollo has actually implied that she should not be  
 21 this: i.e. this kind of marriage  
 24-5 Ay, sir . . . young plants: the tree might rise higher by having the horns of a cuckold (i.e. one betrayed by unfaithfulness)  
 26 Shrewd: accurate, if painful

I would wear my ring on my own finger;  
 Whilst it is borrowed it is none of mine,  
 But his that useth it.  
 LOLLIO You must keep it on still then; if it but lie by,  
 one or other will be thrusting into't. 31  
 ALIBIUS Thou conceiv'st me, Lollo; here thy watchful  
 eye  
 Must have employment. I cannot always be  
 At home.  
 LOLLIO I dare swear you cannot.  
 ALIBIUS I must look out.  
 LOLLIO I know't, you must look out; 'tis every man's  
 case.  
 ALIBIUS Here I do say must thy employment be:  
 To watch her treadings, and in my absence  
 Supply my place. 40  
 LOLLIO I'll do my best, sir; yet surely I cannot see who  
 you should have cause to be jealous of.  
 ALIBIUS Thy reason for that, Lollo? 'Tis a comfortable  
 question.  
 LOLLIO We have but two sorts of people in the house,  
 and both under the whip: that's fools and madmen.  
 The one has not wit enough to be knaves, and the  
 other not knavery enough to be fools.  
 ALIBIUS Ay, those are all my patients, Lollo.  
 I do profess the cure of either sort;  
 My trade, my living 'tis, I thrive by it. 50  
 But here's the care that mixes with my thrift:  
 The daily visitants, that come to see  
 My brainsick patients, I would not have  
 To see my wife. Gallants I do observe  
 Of quick enticing eyes, rich in habits,

- 27 ring: a) wedding ring; b) vagina (slang)  
 finger: could also represent the penis (slang)  
 32 conceiv'st: understand  
 33 employment: could also mean copulation (slang)  
 34 At home: could also mean 'in my wife's vagina' (slang)  
 36 look out: a) be vigilant; b) go away (on business, although the term could also refer to brief sexual adventures, as Lollo implies)  
 37 case: a) plight; b) vagina; c) brothel  
 39 treadings: a) movements; b) sexual acts  
 40 Supply my place: a) act as supervisor b) (as Lollo sees it) have intercourse with her on Alibius's behalf  
 42 jealous: suspicious  
 43 comfortable: comforting  
 45 fools: imbeciles  
 51 care: responsibility  
 thrift: profit  
 52 daily visitants: those who come to view the inmates for entertainment, as at Bethlehem Hospital (Bedlam) in London  
 see: 'often used with innuendo – "for sexual purposes"  
 (Daalder)  
 55 habits: clothes

- Of stature and proportion very comely:  
These are most shrewd temptations, Lollo. 61
- LOLLIO They may be easily answered, sir. If they come to see the fools and madmen, you and I may serve the turn, and let my mistress alone; she's of neither sort.
- ALIBIUS 'Tis a good ward; indeed, come they to see 61  
Our madmen or our fools, let 'em see no more  
Than what they come for. By that consequent  
They must not see her: I'm sure she's no fool.
- LOLLIO And I'm sure she's no madman.
- ALIBIUS Hold that buckler fast, Lollo; my trust  
Is on thee, and I account it firm and strong.  
What hour is't, Lollo?
- LOLLIO Towards belly-hour, sir.
- ALIBIUS Dinner time? Thou mean'st twelve o'clock? 70
- LOLLIO Yes, sir, for every part has his hour. We wake at six and look about us, that's eye-hour; at seven we should pray, that's knee-hour; at eight walk, that's leg-hour; at nine gather flowers and pluck a rose, that's nose-hour; at ten we drink, that's mouth-hour; at eleven lay about us for victuals, that's hand-hour; at twelve go to dinner, that's belly-hour.
- ALIBIUS Profoundly, Lollo! It will be long  
Ere all thy scholars learn this lesson, and  
I did look to have a new one ent' red;—stay, 80  
I think my expectation is come home.
- Enter PEDRO, and ANTONIO like an idiot*
- PEDRO Save you, sir. My business speaks itself:  
This sight takes off the labour of my tongue.
- ALIBIUS Ay, ay, sir,  
'Tis plain enough; you mean him for my patient.
- PEDRO And if your pains prove but commodious, to give but some little strength to the sick and weak part of nature in him, these are (*Gives money*) but patterns to show you of the whole pieces that will follow to
- you, beside the charge of diet, washing, and other necessities fully defrayed. 91
- ALIBIUS Believe it, sir, there shall no care be wanting.
- LOLLIO Sir, an officer in this place may deserve something: the trouble will pass through my hands.
- PEDRO 'Tis fit something should come to your hands then, sir. *Gives him money*
- LOLLIO Yes, sir, 'tis I must keep him sweet and read to him. What is his name?
- PEDRO His name is Antonio. Marry, we use but half to him, only Tony. 100
- LOLLIO Tony, Tony; 'tis enough, and a very good name for a fool.—What's your name, Tony?
- ANTONIO He, he, he! Well, I thank you, cousin! He, he, he!
- LOLLIO Good boy! Hold up your head.—He can laugh: I perceive by that he is no beast.
- PEDRO Well, sir,  
If you can raise him but to any height,  
Any degree of wit—might he attain  
(As I might say) to creep but on all four 110  
Towards the chair of wit, or walk on crutches,  
'Twould add an honour to your worthy pains,  
And a great family might pray for you,  
To which he should be heir, had he discretion  
To claim and guide his own; assure you, sir,  
He is a gentleman.
- LOLLIO Nay, there's nobody doubted that; at first sight I knew him for a gentleman—he looks no other yet.
- PEDRO Let him have good attendance and sweet lodging. 120
- LOLLIO As good as my mistress lies in, sir; and, as you allow us time and means, we can raise him to the higher degree of discretion.
- PEDRO Nay, there shall no cost want, sir.
- LOLLIO He will hardly be stretched up to the wit of a magnifico.
- PEDRO O no, that's not to be expected—far shorter will be enough.

57 shrewd: subtle, hard to resist

59–60 serve the turn: 'be adequate' (said as a joke)

61 ward: guard (from fencing)

63 consequent: logic

64 I'm sure she's no fool: Alibius is in charge of lunatics and Lollo of fools; each knows only his own kind of inmate

66 buckler: shield

71 his: its

74 pluck a rose: a) urinate (most eds); b) euphemism for defecate (Wine)

76 lay about us for victuals: look around for provisions

SD *like an idiot*: presumably dressed in a long coat and pointed cap. Directors of the play need to establish whether or not the audience should be aware from the start of Antonio's delusion

82 Save you: God save you (a common greeting)

83 takes off: removes

86 commodious: beneficial

88 patterns: samples (small coins)

89 whole pieces: substantial coins

97 sweet: clean

100 Tony: common name for a 'fool'

106 no beast: it was believed that the ability to laugh distinguished humans from animals

107–16 Pedro hopes that Lollo will help raise Antonio's 'wit' (understanding) to the point where he would be of financial benefit since he would be able to 'claim and guide' his own estate using his own 'discretion' (judgement)

118 he looks no other yet: a) his disguise can be seen through; b) he is not yet a true fool

124 there shall no cost want: all necessary payment will be made

125 hardly: with difficulty  
stretched up: advanced to

126 magnifico: magistrate (one with judgement)

LOLLIO I warrant you I'll make him fit to bear office in five weeks; I'll undertake to wind him up to the wit of constable. **131**

PEDRO If it be lower than that it might serve turn.

LOLLIO No, fie, to level him with a headborough, beadle, or watchman were but little better than he is; constable I'll able him. If he do come to be a justice afterwards, let him thank the keeper. Or I'll go further with you—say I do bring him up to my own pitch, say I make him as wise as myself.

PEDRO Why, there I would have it.

LOLLIO Well, go to; either I'll be as arrant a fool as he, or he shall be as wise as I, and then I think 'twill serve his turn. **142**

PEDRO Nay, I do like thy wit passing well.

LOLLIO Yes, you may. Yet if I had not been a fool, I had had more wit than I have too: remember what state you find me in.

PEDRO I will, and so leave you. Your best cares, I beseech you. *Exit PEDRO*

ALIBIUS Take you none with you; leave 'em all with us.

ANTONIO O my cousin's gone! Cousin, cousin, O! **150**

LOLLIO Peace, peace, Tony! You must not cry, child—you must be whipped if you do. Your cousin is here still: I am your cousin, Tony.

ANTONIO He, he! Then I'll not cry, if thou be'st my cousin! He, he, he!

LOLLIO I were best try his wit a little, that I may know what form to place him in.

ALIBIUS Ay, do, Lollio, do.

LOLLIO I must ask him easy questions at first.—Tony, how many true fingers has a tailor on his right hand?

ANTONIO As many as on his left, cousin. **161**

LOLLIO Good. And how many on both?

ANTONIO Two less than a deuce, cousin.

131 constable: constables were proverbially stupid

133 headborough: petty constable

134 beadle: parish constable  
watchman: constable of the watch

135 able him: make him fit for  
justice: also seen as stupid

138 pitch: level

140 go to: common expression of astonishment  
arrant: unmitigated, wandering

142 serve his turn: be sufficient

143 passing: extremely

146 state: a) condition; b) position (as keeper of fools) that erodes one's wits, and would only have been chosen by a fool in the first place

150 cousin: term for any close relative or friend

156 try: test

157 form: class in school

160 true: honest (tailors were considered dishonest)

163 Two less than a deuce: i.e. none

LOLLIO Very well answered. I come to you again, cousin Tony. How many fools goes to a wise man?

ANTONIO Forty in a day sometimes, cousin.

LOLLIO Forty in a day? How prove you that?

ANTONIO All that fall out amongst themselves, and go to a lawyer to be made friends. **169**

LOLLIO A parlous fool! He must sit in the fourth form at least, I perceive that.—I come again, Tony. How many knaves make an honest man?

ANTONIO I know not that, cousin.

LOLLIO No, the question is too hard for you. I'll tell you, cousin: there's three knaves may make an honest man—a sergeant, a jailor, and a beadle. The sergeant catches him, the jailor holds him, and the beadle lashes him. And if he be not honest then, the hangman must cure him.

ANTONIO Ha, ha, ha! That's fine sport, cousin! **180**

ALIBIUS This was too deep a question for the fool, Lollio.

LOLLIO Yes, this might have served yourself, though I say't. Once more, and you shall go play, Tony.

ANTONIO Ay, play at push-pin, cousin, ha, he!

LOLLIO So thou shalt. Say how many fools are here.

ANTONIO Two, cousin: thou and I.

LOLLIO Nay, y'are too forward there, Tony. Mark my question: how many fools and knaves are here? A fool before a knave, a fool behind a knave, between every two fools a knave: how many fools, how many knaves?

ANTONIO I never learnt so far, cousin. **192**

ALIBIUS Thou putt'st too hard questions to him, Lollio.

LOLLIO I'll make him understand it easily.—Cousin, stand there.

ANTONIO Ay, cousin.

LOLLIO Master, stand you next the fool.

ALIBIUS Well, Lollio?

LOLLIO Here's my place. Mark now, Tony, there's a fool before a knave. **200**

ANTONIO That's I, cousin.

LOLLIO Here's a fool behind a knave, that's I; and

165 goes to: a) make up; b) visit

168-9 All that . . . made friends: only fools think that lawyers would help since, in fact, they prolong litigation in the pursuit of profit

170 parlous: perilous, dangerously cunning

172 make: a) make up; b) create

180 sport: entertainment (both the description of the knave's plight and Lollio's rendering of it)

183 served yourself: 'been appropriate for you'

185 push-pin: a children's game (but here with sexual connotations)

188 forward: eager

189-91 A fool . . . many knaves: the actors must stand in order with Alibius in the middle

201 That's I: Antonio is supposed to be a fool and the configuration turns Alibius into a knave

between us two fools there is a knave, that's my master. 'Tis but we three, that's all.

ANTONIO We three, we three, cousin! MADMEN *within*

1 MADMAN (*within*) Put's head i'th'pillory, the bread's too little.

2 MADMAN (*within*) Fly, fly, and he catches the swallow.

3 MADMAN (*within*) Give her more onion, or the devil put the rope about her crag. 210

LOLLIO You may hear what time of day it is: the chimes of Bedlam goes.

ALIBIUS Peace, peace, or the wire comes!

3 MADMAN (*within*) Cat-whore, cat-whore, her permasant, her permasant.

ALIBIUS Peace, I say!—Their hour's come; they must be fed, Lollio.

LOLLIO There's no hope of recovery of that Welsh madman was undone by a mouse that spoiled him a permasant; lost his wits for't. 220

ALIBIUS Go you to your charge, Lollio; I'll to mine.

LOLLIO Go you to your madmen's ward; let me alone with your fools.

ALIBIUS And remember my last charge, Lollio. *Exit*

LOLLIO Of which your patients do you think I am?—Come, Tony, you must amongst your school-fellows now. There's pretty scholars amongst'em, I can tell you; there's some of'em at *stultus, stulta, stultum*.

ANTONIO I would see the madmen, cousin, if they would not bite me. 230

LOLLIO No, they shall not bite thee, Tony.

204 we three: 'a common joke on a picture of two fools called "we three" to include the spectator' (Kinney)

206 pillory: wooden frame with holes for hands and feet used as a public punishment  
bread's too little: provisions are short

208 Fly, fly . . . the swallow: something seems possible that is not (proverbial)

209 Give her more onion: Give me more onion (an urgent demand for food from the proverb: 'if thou hast not a capon feed on an onion')  
rope: noose. The 'her' for 'me' is stage Welsh

210 crag: neck

212 chimes of Bedlam: the inmates' cries for food

213 the wire: whips (made of wire)

214 Cat-whore . . . permasant: the cat behaves like a whore because it allows a mouse to eat his ('her') cheese

215 permasant: Parmesan cheese

218–19 Welsh madman: a seventeenth-century audience would have associated the Welsh with a fondness for cheese

221 charge: duty

224 my last charge: 'my last instruction' (i.e. to spy on Isabella)

225 Of which: of which kind (i.e. fool or madman)

227 pretty: clever

228 Some of . . . *stulta, stultum*: some of the patients can decline the Latin word for stupid

230 bite: could also mean 'steal from'

ANTONIO They bite when they are at dinner, do they not, coz?

LOLLIO They bite at dinner indeed, Tony. Well, I hope to get credit by thee; I like thee the best of all the scholars that ever I brought up, and thou shalt prove a wise man, or I'll prove a fool myself.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene i

*Enter BEATRICE and JASPERINO severally*

BEATRICE O sir, I am ready now for that fair service Which makes the name of friend sit glorious on you! Good angels and this conduct be your guide.

*Gives a paper*

Fitness of time and place is there set down, sir.  
JASPERINO The joy I shall return rewards my service.

*Exit*

BEATRICE How wise is Alsemero in his friend! It is a sign he makes his choice with judgement. Then I appear in nothing more approved Than making choice of him; For 'tis a principle, he that can choose 10 That bosom well who of his thoughts partakes, Proves most discreet in every choice he makes. Methinks I love now with the eyes of judgement, And see the way to merit, clearly see it. A true deserver like a diamond sparkles; In darkness you may see him, that's in absence, Which is the greatest darkness falls on love: Yet is he best discerned then, With intellectual eyesight. What's Piracquo My father spends his breath for? And his blessing 20 Is only mine as I regard his name; Else it goes from me, and turns head against me, Transformed into a curse. Some speedy way Must be rememb'ed—he's so forward too, So urgent that way, scarce allows me breath To speak to my new comforts.

232 coz: cousin

3 conduct: sheet of paper with directions

5 return: take back to Alsemero

8 approved: justified

11 bosom: intimate friend

14 to: to recognize

15 diamond: diamonds were thought to be luminous

17 falls: that falls

20–1 And his . . . his name: Vermandero's blessing will only be given to a marriage that maintains the family's name and reputation

22 turns head: directs its power

24 rememb'ed: brought to mind  
he's so forward: Vermandero is so eager, impatient

26 speak to . . . new comforts: address the new joys that Alsemero's love has brought



Enter DE FLORES

DE FLORES (*Aside*) Yonder's she.  
 Whatever ails me, now a-late especially  
 I can as well be hanged as refrain seeing her.  
 Some twenty times a day, nay not so little,  
 Do I force errands, frame ways and excuses  
 To come into her sight—and I have small reason  
 for't,  
 And less encouragement: for she baits me still  
 Every time worse than other, does profess herself  
 The cruellest enemy to my face in town,  
 At no hand can abide the sight of me,  
 As if danger or ill luck hung in my looks.  
 I must confess my face is bad enough,  
 But I know far worse has better fortune,  
 And not endured alone, but doted on:  
 And yet such pick-haired faces, chins like witches', 40  
 Here and there five hairs, whispering in a corner  
 As if they grew in fear one of another,  
 Wrinkles like troughs, where swine-deformity swills  
 The tears of perjury that lie there like wash  
 Fallen from the slimy and dishonest eye—  
 Yet such a one plucks sweets without restraint,  
 And has the grace of beauty to his sweet.  
 Though my hard fate has thrust me out to servitude,  
 I tumbled into th' world a gentleman.  
 She turns her blessed eye upon me now, 50  
 And I'll endure all storms before I part with't.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) Again!  
 This ominous, ill-faced fellow more disturbs me  
 Than all my other passions.  
 DE FLORES (*Aside*) Now't begins again;  
 I'll stand this storm of hail though the stones pelt me.  
 BEATRICE Thy business? What's thy business?  
 DE FLORES (*Aside*) Soft and fair;  
 I cannot part so soon now.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) The villain's fixed.—

27 a-late: of late  
 30 force: invent  
 32 baits: a) tempts (as in fishing and hunting); b) taunts  
 (as in bull-baiting)  
 34 in town: publicly  
 35 At no hand: on no account  
 40 pick-haired: beard made up of a few hairs  
 43 swine-deformity: pig-like resemblance  
 44 perjury: hypocrisy  
 wash: discharge  
 46 plucks sweets: enjoys sexual favours  
 47 to his sweet: in the eyes of his sweetheart  
 49 tumbled: was born  
 54 passions: a) sufferings; b) strong emotions; c) sexual  
 desires  
 56 soft and fair: speak calmly and well; from the expression  
 'fair and softly goes far' (proverbial)

(*To DE FLORES*) Thou standing toad-pool!  
 DE FLORES (*Aside*) The shower  
 falls amain now.  
 BEATRICE Who sent thee? What's thy errand? Leave  
 my sight!  
 DE FLORES My Lord your father charged me to deliver  
 A message to you. 30  
 BEATRICE What, another since? 61  
 Do't and be hanged then; let me be rid of thee.  
 DE FLORES True service merits mercy.  
 BEATRICE What's thy message?  
 DE FLORES Let beauty settle but in patience,  
 You shall hear all.  
 BEATRICE A dallying, trifling torment!  
 DE FLORES Signor Alonzo de Piracquo, lady,  
 Sole brother to Tomazo de Piracquo—  
 BEATRICE Slave, when wilt make an end?  
 DE FLORES (*Aside*) Too soon I shall.  
 BEATRICE What all this while of him?  
 DE FLORES The said Alonzo,  
 With the foresaid Tomazo—  
 BEATRICE Yet again? 70  
 DE FLORES Is new alighted.  
 BEATRICE Vengeance strike the news!  
 Thou thing most loathed, what cause was there in  
 this  
 To bring thee to my sight?  
 DE FLORES My lord your father  
 Charged me to seek you out.  
 BEATRICE Is there no other  
 To send his errand by?  
 DE FLORES It seems 'tis my luck  
 To be i'th'way still.  
 BEATRICE Get thee from me!  
 DE FLORES (*Aside*) So!—  
 Why, am not I an ass to devise ways  
 Thus to be railed at? I must see her still;  
 I shall have a mad qualm within this hour again,  
 I know't, and, like a common Garden-bull, 80  
 I do but take breath to be lugged again.  
 What this may bode I know not. I'll despair the less  
 Because there's daily precedents of bad faces

58 standing toad pool: stagnant water harbouring only the  
 ugliest of creatures  
 shower: shower of abuse  
 amain: forcefully  
 61 since: yet  
 65 dallying: time-wasting  
 68 Slave: wretch  
 78 railed at: insulted  
 79 mad qualm: attack of a) illness; b) sexual desire  
 80 like a . . . Garden-bull: 'like one of the bulls baited in the  
 Paris Garden in Southwark' (Wine)  
 81 lugged: pulled by the 'lugs' (ears) as the dogs would do in  
 bear-baiting

Beloved beyond all reason. These foul chops  
 May come into favour one day 'mongst his fellows.  
 Wrangling has proved the mistress of good pastime;  
 As children cry themselves asleep, I ha' seen  
 Women have chid themselves a-bed to men.

*Exit DE FLORES*

BEATRICE I never see this fellow but I think  
 Of some harm towards me: danger's in my mind still,  
 I scarce leave trembling of an hour after. 91  
 The next good mood I find my father in,  
 I'll get him quite discarded.—O, I was  
 Lost in this small disturbance and forgot  
 Affliction's fiercer torrent that now comes  
 To bear down all my comforts!

*Enter VERMANDERO, ALONZO, TOMAZO*

VERMANDERO Y'are both welcome,  
 But an especial one belongs to you, sir,  
 To whose most noble name our love presents  
 The addition of a son, our son Alonzo.

ALONZO The treasury of honour cannot bring forth 100  
 A title I should more rejoice in, sir.

VERMANDERO You have improved it well.—Daughter,  
 prepare:

The day will steal upon thee suddenly.

BEATRICE (*Aside*) Howe'er, I will be sure to keep the  
 night,

If it should come so near me.

*BEATRICE and VERMANDERO talk apart*

TOMAZO Alonzo.

ALONZO Brother?

TOMAZO In troth I see small welcome in her eye.

ALONZO Fie, you are too severe a censurer

Of love in all points; there's no bringing on you.

If lovers should mark everything a fault

Affection would be like an ill-set book 110

Whose faults might prove as big as half the volume.

BEATRICE That's all I do entreat.

84 chops: jaws (metonymy for the face)

85 his: theirs (the 'chops')

88 chid: chided

91 of: for

93 discarded: sacked, dismissed

99 addition: i.e. additional title

100 treasury of honour: 'the whole compendium of honorific titles' (Frost)

102 improved: enhanced

104 keep the night: unclear. Beatrice possibly means 'avoid the day by keeping hold of the night before' or 'keep control during the wedding night' (denying herself to Alonzo)

107 severe a censurer: strict a critic

108 points: a) respects; b) punctuation marks (or details, as from a strict critic)

bringing on you: 'bringing you around to see that'

110 ill-set: badly typeset

111 faults: list of misprints (errata)

VERMANDERO It is but reasonable.  
 I'll see what my son says to 't.—Son Alonzo,  
 Here's a motion made but to reprieve  
 A maidenhead three days longer. The request  
 Is not far out of reason, for indeed  
 The former time is pinching.

ALONZO Though my joys  
 Be set back so much time as I could wish  
 They had been forward, yet, since she desires it,  
 The time is set as pleasing as before; 120  
 I find no gladness wanting.

VERMANDERO May I ever  
 Meet it in that point still. Y'are nobly welcome, sirs.  
*Exeunt VERMANDERO and BEATRICE*

TOMAZO So. Did you mark the dullness of her parting  
 now?

ALONZO What dullness? Thou art so exceptious still!

TOMAZO Why, let it go then. I am but a fool

To mark your harms so heedfully.

ALONZO Where's the oversight?

TOMAZO Come, your faith's cozened in her, strongly  
 cozened:

Unsettle your affection with all speed

Wisdom can bring it to; your peace is ruined else.

Think what a torment 'tis to marry one 130

Whose heart is leapt into another's bosom:

If ever pleasure she receive from thee,

It comes not in thy name, or of thy gift—

She lies but with another in thine arms,

He the half father unto all thy children

In the conception; if he get 'em not,

She helps to get 'em for him, in his passions;

And how dangerous

And shameful her restraint may go in time to

It is not to be thought on without sufferings. 140

ALONZO You speak as if she loved some other then.

TOMAZO Do you apprehend so slowly?

ALONZO Nay, and that

114 motion: proposal

117 pinching: a) admittedly short; b) inadequate joys: with sexual overtones

121-2 May I . . . point still: Vermandero hopes that he will always be able to reach such accords with Alonzo

123 dullness: indifference

124 exceptious: given to making objections

126 heedfully: sensitively

the: my

127 cozened: deceived

128 Unsettle: detach

132 pleasure: sexual enjoyment

134 She lies . . . thine arms: she imagines that she is sleeping with someone else while she is in your arms

136 get: beget

139 her restraint . . . in time: her behaviour may become if so restrained

142 and: if

Be your fear only, I am safe enough.  
 Preserve your friendship and your counsel, brother,  
 For times of more distress; I should depart  
 An enemy, a dangerous, deadly one  
 To any but thyself that should but think  
 She knew the meaning of inconstancy,  
 Much less the use and practice. Yet w'are friends:  
 Pray let no more be urged; I can endure **150**  
 Much, till I meet an injury to her,  
 Then I am not myself. Farewell, sweet brother;  
 How much w'are bound to heaven to depart lovingly!

*Exit*

TOMAZO Why, here is love's tame madness: thus a man  
 Quickly steals into his vexation.

*Exit*

## Act II, scene ii

*Enter DIAPHANTA and ALSEMERO*

DIAPHANTA The place is my charge; you have kept  
 your hour,  
 And the reward of a just meeting bless you!  
 I hear my lady coming. Complete gentleman,  
 I dare not be too busy with my praises;  
 Th'are dangerous things to deal with. *Exit*

ALSEMERO This goes well.  
 These women are the ladies' cabinets;  
 Things of most precious trust are locked into 'em.

*Enter BEATRICE*

BEATRICE I have within mine eye all my desires;  
 Requests that holy prayers ascend heaven for,  
 And brings 'em down to furnish our defects, **10**  
 Come not more sweet to our necessities  
 Than thou unto my wishes.

ALSEMERO We are so like  
 In our expressions, lady, that unless I borrow  
 The same words, I shall never find their equals.

*Kisses her*

BEATRICE How happy were this meeting, this embrace,  
 If it were free from envy! This poor kiss,  
 It has an enemy, a hateful one,  
 That wishes poison to't. How well were I now

149 yet: still  
 151 injury: insult  
 155 steals: proceeds with ignorance  
 vexation: suffering  
 1 my charge: my responsibility  
 3 Complete: perfect  
 4 busy: open  
 5 dangerous: since Beatrice might hear them  
 6 cabinets: metaphor for confidants  
 10 defects: what we lack  
 16 envy: enmity  
 17 enemy: i.e. Alonzo

If there were none such name known as Piracquo,  
 Nor no such tie as the command of parents! **20**  
 I should be but too much blessed.

ALSEMERO One good service  
 Would strike off both your fears, and I'll go near it  
 too,  
 Since you are so distressed. Remove the cause,  
 The command ceases; so there's two fears blown out  
 With one and the same blast.

BEATRICE Pray let me find you, sir;  
 What might that service be, so strangely happy?

ALSEMERO The honourablest piece about man, valour.  
 I'll send a challenge to Piracquo instantly.

BEATRICE How? Call you that extinguishing of fear  
 When 'tis the only way to keep it flaming? **30**

Are not you ventured in the action,  
 That's all my joys and comforts? Pray, no more, sir.  
 Say you prevailed, you're danger's and not mine then:  
 The law would claim you from me, or obscurity  
 Be made the grave to bury you alive.  
 I'm glad these thoughts come forth; O keep not one  
 Of this condition, sir! Here was a course  
 Found to bring sorrow on her way to death:  
 The tears would ne'er ha' dried till dust had  
 choked'em.

Blood-guiltiness becomes a fouler visage; **40**  
*(Aside)*—And now I think on one: I was to blame  
 I ha' marred so good a market with my scorn.  
 'T had been done questionless: the ugliest creature

20 command: i.e. Vermandero's 'command' that Beatrice  
 should marry Alonzo  
 22 strike off: as with a) fetters; b) items on a list of debts  
 go near it: be more explicit  
 23 the cause: i.e. Alonzo  
 24-5 two fears . . . same blast: either two 'enemies' eliminated  
 with one blast of gunpowder (Kinney) or two lights  
 blown out with one puff of air (Sampson)  
 25 find: understand, follow  
 26 happy: fortunate  
 27 piece about: attribute of  
 31 ventured: risked  
 33 you're danger's: you belong to danger  
 34 the law: i.e. against duelling  
 obscurity: the need to hide (from the law)  
 37 condition: kind  
 38 on her way: i.e. all the way  
 40 becomes: makes, suits  
 41 one: i.e. a fouler face in reality, De Flores  
 42 I ha' . . . a good market: spoiled a profitable opportunity  
 (proverbial)  
 43 'T had been done questionless: a) the scorn had been  
 instinctive (and therefore the opportunity lost); b) De  
 Flores would have acted (on the idea of the elimination  
 of Alonzo) without hesitation  
 43-4 the ugliest . . . some use: refers to the notion that  
 everyone is created for some purpose

Creation framed for some use! Yet to see  
I could not mark so much where it should be!  
ALSEMERO Lady—  
BEATRICE (*Aside*) Why, men of art make much of  
poison,  
Keep one to expel another. Where was my art?  
ALSEMERO Lady, you hear not me.  
BEATRICE I do especially, sir.  
The present times are not so sure of our side  
As those hereafter may be; we must use 'em then 50  
As thrifty folks their wealth, sparingly now,  
Till the time opens.  
ALSEMERO You teach wisdom, lady.  
BEATRICE Within there! Diaphanta!

*Enter DIAPHANTA*

DIAPHANTA Do you call, madam?  
BEATRICE Perfect your service, and conduct this  
gentleman  
The private way you brought him.  
DIAPHANTA I shall, madam.  
ALSEMERO My love's as firm as love e'er built upon.  
*Exeunt DIAPHANTA and ALSEMERO*

*Enter DE FLORES*

DE FLORES (*Aside*) I have watched this meeting, and do  
wonder much  
What shall become of t'other; I'm sure both  
Cannot be served unless she transgress. Happily 60  
Then I'll put in for one; for if a woman  
Fly from one point, from him she makes a husband,  
She spreads and mounts then, like arithmetic,  
One, ten, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand—  
Proves in time sutler to an army royal.  
Now do I look to be most richly railed at,  
Yet I must see her.  
BEATRICE (*Aside*) Why, put case I loathed him  
As much as youth and beauty hates a sepulchre,  
Must I needs show it? Cannot I keep that secret,

45 mark so . . . should be!: i.e. perceive the usefulness of De Flores  
46 art: a) science, knowledge; b) cunning (artfulness)  
47 expel: neutralise  
49 sure of: securely on  
52 opens: becomes more favourable  
54 Perfect: complete  
58 t'other: Alonzo  
59 Happily: puns on 'haply', perhaps  
60 put in for one: offer my services (implying a bid for Beatrice's sexual favour)  
61 point: a) situation; b) penis  
62 spreads and mounts: as with birds (but with sexual connotation)  
64 sutler: a) provisioner to an army; b) prostitute  
66 put case: suppose

And serve my turn upon him? See, he's here.  
(*To him*) De Flores.  
DE FLORES (*Aside*) Ha, I shall run mad with joy! 70  
She called me fairly by my name, De Flores,  
And neither rogue nor rascal.  
BEATRICE What ha' you done  
To your face a-late? Y'have met with some good  
physician;  
Y'have pruned yourself methinks: you were not wont  
To look so amorously.  
DE FLORES (*Aside*) Not I;—  
'Tis the same physnomy, to a hair and pimple,  
Which she called scurvy scarce an hour ago.  
How is this?  
BEATRICE Come hither, nearer, man!  
DE FLORES (*Aside*) I'm up to the chin in heaven.  
BEATRICE Turn, let me see.  
Fough, 'tis but the heat of the liver, I perceive't; 80  
I thought it had been worse.  
DE FLORES (*Aside*) Her fingers touched me!  
She smells all amber.  
BEATRICE I'll make a water for you shall cleanse this  
Within a fortnight.  
DE FLORES With your own hands, lady?  
BEATRICE Yes, mine own, sir; in a work of cure  
I'll trust no other.  
DE FLORES (*Aside*) 'Tis half an act of pleasure  
To hear her talk thus to me.  
BEATRICE When w'are used  
To a hard face, it is not so unpleasing;  
It mends still in opinion, hourly mends,  
I see it by experience.  
DE FLORES (*Aside*) I was blest 90  
To light upon this minute; I'll make use on't.  
BEATRICE Hardness becomes the visage of a man well:  
It argues service, resolution, manhood,  
If cause were of employment.  
DE FLORES 'Twould be soon seen,  
If e'er your ladyship had cause to use it.  
I would but wish the honour of a service  
So happy as that mounts to.

69 serve my . . . upon him?: make use of him for myself  
74 pruned: preened (as with a bird and its feathers)  
75 amorously: a) lovely; b) lusty  
76 physnomy: physiognomy, face  
77 scurvy: scabby  
80 heat of the liver: inflammation of the organ thought in the seventeenth century to be responsible for violent passions  
82 amber: i.e. ambergris, used in perfume  
83 water: lotion  
86 pleasure: copulation  
88 hard: ugly  
94 If cause: were there cause  
employment: a) work; b) copulation  
97 mounts: amounts

BEATRICE We shall try you.—O my De Flores!  
 DE FLORES (*Aside*) How's that?  
 She calls me hers already, 'my' De Flores!  
 (*To Beatrice*) You were about to sigh out somewhat,  
 madam? 100  
 BEATRICE No, was I? I forgot.—O!  
 DE FLORES There 'tis again,  
 The very fellow on't.  
 BEATRICE You are too quick, sir.  
 DE FLORES There's no excuse for't now; I heard it  
 twice, madam.  
 That sigh would fain have utterance; take pity on't,  
 And lend it a free word. 'Las, how it labours  
 For liberty! I hear the murmur yet  
 Beat at your bosom.  
 BEATRICE Would creation—  
 DE FLORES Ay, well said, that's it.  
 BEATRICE Had formed me man.  
 DE FLORES Nay, that's not it.  
 BEATRICE O 'tis the soul of freedom!  
 I should not then be forced to marry one 110  
 I hate beyond all depths; I should have power  
 Then to oppose my loathings, nay, remove 'em  
 For ever from my sight.  
 DE FLORES O blest occasion!—  
 Without change to your sex you have your wishes.  
 Claim so much man in me.  
 BEATRICE In thee, De Flores?  
 There's small cause for that.  
 DE FLORES Put it not from me,  
 It's a service that I kneel for to you. *He kneels*  
 BEATRICE You are too violent to mean faithfully.  
 There's horror in my service, blood and danger;  
 Can those be things to sue for?  
 DE FLORES If you knew 120  
 How sweet it were to me to be employed  
 In any act of yours, you would say then  
 I failed, and used not reverence enough  
 When I received the charge on't.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) This is much,  
 methinks;  
 Belike his wants are greedy, and to such  
 Gold tastes like angels' food. (*To DE FLORES*) Rise.  
 DE FLORES I'll have the work first.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) Possible his need

98 try: can mean 'take the sexual measure of'  
 102 quick a) hasty; b) sexually vigorous  
 104 fain: truly  
 107 creation: De Flores hears this as 'procreation'  
 113 occasion: opportunity  
 118 to mean faithfully: to intend to do what you claim  
 125 Belike his wants are greedy: perhaps his needs are like  
 hunger  
 126 angels' food: manna from heaven (see Psalm 78.25)  
 127 Possible: possibly

Is strong upon him. (*Gives him money*)—There's to  
 encourage thee;  
 As thou art forward and thy service dangerous,  
 Thy reward shall be precious.  
 DE FLORES That I have thought on.  
 I have assured myself of that beforehand, 131  
 And know it will be precious; the thought ravishes!  
 BEATRICE Then take him to thy fury.  
 DE FLORES I thirst for him.  
 BEATRICE Alonzo de Piracquo.  
 DE FLORES His end's upon him,  
 He shall be seen no more. *Rises*  
 BEATRICE How lovely now  
 Dost thou appear to me! Never was man  
 Dearlier rewarded.  
 DE FLORES I do think of that.  
 BEATRICE Be wondrous careful in the execution.  
 DE FLORES Why, are not both our lives upon the cast?  
 BEATRICE Then I throw all my fears upon thy service.  
 DE FLORES They ne'er shall rise to hurt you. 141  
 BEATRICE When the deed's done,  
 I'll furnish thee with all things for thy flight;  
 Thou may'st live bravely in another country.  
 DE FLORES Ay, ay, we'll talk of that hereafter.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) I shall rid myself  
 Of two inveterate loathings at one time,  
 Piracquo, and his dog-face. *Exit*  
 DE FLORES O my blood!  
 Methinks I feel her in mine arms already,  
 Her wanton fingers combing out this beard,  
 And, being pleased, praising this bad face.  
 Hunger and pleasure, they'll commend sometimes 150  
 Slovenly dishes, and feed heartily on 'em,  
 Nay, which is stranger, refuse daintier for 'em.  
 Some women are odd feeders.—I'm too loud:  
 Here comes the man goes supperless to bed,  
 Yet shall not rise tomorrow to his dinner.

Enter ALONZO

ALONZO De Flores.  
 DE FLORES My kind, honourable lord?

130 precious: Beatrice means financially; De Flores  
 understands the reward as the 'deflowering' of  
 Beatrice  
 135 lovely: worthy of love  
 139 cast: i.e. of dice (as in gambling)  
 143 bravely: splendidly  
 150 pleasure: sexual desire  
 commend: command  
 151 slovenly: base, lewd  
 feed: devour sexually  
 154-5 Here comes . . . his dinner: Alonzo will be killed before  
 supper that day and before sexual consummation  
 (continuing the association in this speech between  
 appetite for food and sexual appetite)

ALONZO I am glad I ha' met with thee.  
 DE FLORES Sir.  
 ALONZO Thou canst show me  
 The full strength of the castle?  
 DE FLORES That I can, sir.  
 ALONZO I much desire it.  
 DE FLORES And if the ways and straits  
 Of some of the passages be not too tedious for you, 160  
 I will assure you, worth your time and sight, my lord.  
 ALONZO Puh, that shall be no hindrance.  
 DE FLORES I'm your servant, then.  
 'Tis now near dinner-time; 'gainst your lordship's  
 rising  
 I'll have the keys about me.  
 ALONZO Thanks, kind De Flores.  
 DE FLORES (*Aside*) He's safely thrust upon me beyond  
 hopes.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene i

*Enter ALONZO and DE FLORES. In the act-time DE FLORES hides a naked rapier*

DE FLORES Yes, here are all the keys. I was afraid, my  
 lord,  
 I'd wanted for the postern; this is it.  
 I've all, I've all, my lord; this for the sconce.  
 ALONZO 'Tis a most spacious and impregnable fort.  
 DE FLORES You'll tell me more, my lord. This descent  
 Is somewhat narrow, we shall never pass  
 Well with our weapons, they'll but trouble us.  
*Takes off his sword*  
 ALONZO Thou sayest true.  
 DE FLORES Pray let me help your lordship.  
*Takes Alonzo's sword*  
 ALONZO 'Tis done. Thanks, kind De Flores.  
 DE FLORES Here are hooks, my lord,  
 To hang such things on purpose. *Hangs up the swords*  
 ALONZO Lead, I'll follow thee. II  
*Exeunt at one door and enter at the other*

159 straits: narrow parts (as at sea), implying danger  
 160 tedious: troublesome  
 163 'gainst: before  
 rising: getting up from dinner  
 165 safely: 'in that the murder and the body can be kept from  
 view; otherwise ironic' (Daalder)  
 SD *act-time*: between the acts. De Flores hides a rapier with  
 which to kill Alonzo while openly wearing a sword  
 2 wanted: had not got the key  
 postern: back door  
 3 sconce: small, separate fortification

### Act III, scene ii

DE FLORES All this is nothing; you shall see anon  
 A place you little dream on.  
 ALONZO I am glad  
 I have this leisure; all your master's house  
 Imagine I ha' taken a gondola.  
 DE FLORES All but myself, sir,—(*Aside*) which makes  
 up my safety.  
 (*To ALONZO*) My lord, I'll place you at a casement  
 here  
 Will show you the full strength of all the castle.  
 Look, spend your eye a while upon that object.  
 ALONZO Here's rich variety, De Flores.  
 DE FLORES Yes, sir.  
 ALONZO Goodly munition.  
 DE FLORES Ay, there's ordnance, sir—  
 No bastard metal—will ring you a peal like bells II  
 At great men's funerals. Keep your eye straight, my  
 lord,  
 Take special notice of that sconce before you:  
 There you may dwell awhile.  
*Takes up the hidden rapier*  
 I am upon't.  
 ALONZO And so am I. *Stabs him*  
 ALONZO De Flores! O, De Flores!  
 Whose malice hast thou put on?  
 DE FLORES Do you question  
 A work of secrecy? I must silence you. *Stabs him*  
 ALONZO O, O, O!  
 DE FLORES I must silence you. *Stabs him and he dies*  
 So, here's an undertaking well accomplished.  
 This vault serves to good use now.—Ha! What's that  
 Threw sparkles in my eye?—O, 'tis a diamond II  
 He wears upon his finger. It was well found:  
 This will approve the work. What, so fast on?  
 Not part in death? I'll take a speedy course then:

2 place: both an inner part of the castle and, ironically, the  
 grave  
 4 gondola: small boat (to leave Alicant temporarily)  
 5 All but myself, sir: i.e. everyone but De Flores thinks that  
 Alonzo has taken a boat trip (hence De Flores' 'safety' in  
 the plot)  
 6 casement: an aperture or window, serving as a viewing  
 point for the fortifications  
 7 Will: which will  
 10 munition: general weaponry  
 ordnance: large artillery  
 11 bastard: impure, low quality  
 peal: discharge  
 14 dwell: a) pause; b) stay (once dead)  
 16 malice: hatred  
 23 approve the work: confirm that the deed has been done  
 (to Beatrice)  
 fast: tightly

Finger and all shall off. (*Cuts off the finger*) So, now  
I'll clear  
The passages from all suspect or fear.

*Exit with body*

### Act III, scene iii

*Enter ISABELLA and LOLLIO*

ISABELLA Why, sirrah? Whence have you commission  
To fetter the doors against me? If you  
Keep me in a cage, pray whistle to me,  
Let me be doing something.

LOLLIO You shall be doing, if it please you; I'll whistle  
to you if you'll pipe after.

ISABELLA Is it your master's pleasure or your own  
To keep me in this pinfold?

LOLLIO 'Tis for my master's pleasure; lest, being taken  
in another man's corn, you might be pounded in  
another place. II

ISABELLA 'Tis very well, and he'll prove very wise.

LOLLIO He says you have company enough in the  
house, if you please to be sociable, of all sorts of  
people.

ISABELLA Of all sorts? Why, here's none but fools and  
madmen.

LOLLIO Very well: and where will you find any other, if  
you should go abroad? There's my master and I to  
boot too.

ISABELLA Of either sort one, a madman and a fool. 20

LOLLIO I would ev'n participate of both then, if I were as  
you: I know y'are half mad already, be half foolish too.

ISABELLA Y'are a brave, saucy rascal. Come on, sir,

Afford me then the pleasure of your bedlam;  
You were commending once today to me  
Your last-come lunatic: what a proper  
Body there was without brains to guide it,  
And what a pitiful delight appeared  
In that defect, as if your wisdom had found  
A mirth in madness. Pray sir, let me partake, 30

26 suspect: suspicion

1 sirrah: a form of 'sir' (used for inferiors)

5 doing: i.e. copulating

5-6 I'll whistle . . . pipe after: Lolloio alludes to the saying 'to  
dance after a person's pipe', with a sexual sense of 'dance'  
(copulate) and 'pipe' (penis)

8 pinfold: pound for animals

10 pounded: a) placed in a pound; b) pounded with a pestle  
(with sexual connotation)

11 another place: her vagina

18 abroad: beyond the madhouse

21 participate: i.e. sexually

22 be half foolish too: i.e. have a relationship with us both

23 brave: bold

saucy: impudent

26 proper: handsome, well-endowed

If there be such a pleasure.

LOLLIO If I do not show you the handsomest,  
discreetest madman, one that I may call the  
understanding madman, then say I am a fool.

ISABELLA Well, a match: I will say so.

LOLLIO When you have had a taste of the madman,  
you shall, if you please, see Fools' College, o' th'other  
side. I seldom lock there; 'tis but shooting a bolt or  
two, and you are amongst 'em. (*Exit. Enter presently*)  
—Come on, sir, let me see how handsomely you'll  
behave yourself now. 41

*Enter FRANCISCUS*

FRANCISCUS How sweetly she looks! O, but there's a  
wrinkle in her brow as deep as philosophy.—  
Anacreon, drink to my mistress' health, I'll pledge it.  
Stay, stay, there's a spider in the cup! No, 'tis but a  
grape-stone; swallow it, fear nothing, poet. So, so; lift  
higher.

ISABELLA Alack, alack, it is too full of pity  
To be laughed at. How fell he mad? Canst thou tell?

LOLLIO For love, mistress. He was a pretty poet too,  
and that set him forwards first. The Muses then  
forsook him; he ran mad for a chambermaid, yet she  
was but a dwarf neither. 53

FRANCISCUS Hail, bright Titania!  
Why stand'st thou idle on these flow'ry banks?  
Oberon is dancing with his Dryades;  
I'll gather daisies, primrose, violets,  
And bind them in a verse of poesy.

*Approaches ISABELLA*

LOLLIO Not too near! You see your danger.

*Holds up a whip*

FRANCISCUS O hold thy hand, great Diomed!  
Thou feed'st thy horses well, they shall obey thee.  
Get up, Bucephalus kneels. 60  
*Kneels*

33 discreetest: i.e. showing the qualities described

35 a match: agreed

38 shooting: pulling back

44 Anacreon: a Greek poet said to have choked to death on  
a grape pip while drinking wine

48 full of pity: pitiful

53 but a dwarf neither: only a dwarf

54 Titania: Queen of the Fairies (in Shakespeare's  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595))

56 Oberon: King of the Fairies, unfaithful to Titania with  
Dryades (wood-nymphs). Franciscus suggests that  
Isabella may be too inactive while Alibi (Oberon) is  
copulating ("dancing") with other women' (Daalder)

57 daisies, primroses, violets: symbols of praise

58 poesy: a) poetry; b) bunch of flowers

60 Diomed: Diamedes, King of the Bistonians, who fed his  
horses with human flesh

62 Bucephalus: Alexander the Great's horse, which only he  
could mount. Franciscus urges Lolloio to mount ('get up')  
as he pretends to be the horse

- LOLLIO You see how I awe my flock. A shepherd has not his dog at more obedience.
- ISABELLA His conscience is unquiet; sure that was The cause of this. A proper gentleman.
- FRANCISCUS Come hither, Aesculapius. Hide the poison.
- LOLLIO Well, 'tis hid. *Hides the whip*
- FRANCISCUS (*Rising*) Didst thou never hear of one Tiresias,  
A famous poet? 70
- LOLLIO Yes, that kept tame wild-geese.
- FRANCISCUS That's he; I am the man.
- LOLLIO No!
- FRANCISCUS Yes. But make no words on't: I was a man  
Seven years ago—
- LOLLIO A stripling, I think, you might—
- FRANCISCUS Now I'm a woman, all feminine.
- LOLLIO I would I might see that.
- FRANCISCUS Juno struck me blind.
- LOLLIO I'll ne'er believe that; for a woman, they say,  
has an eye more than a man. 81
- FRANCISCUS I say she struck me blind.
- LOLLIO And Luna made you mad: you have two trades  
to beg with.
- FRANCISCUS Luna is now big-bellied, and there's room  
For both of us to ride with Hecate;  
I'll drag thee up into her silver sphere,  
And there we'll kick the dog—and beat the bush—  
That barks against the witches of the night;  
The swift lycanthropi that walks the round, 90  
We'll tear their wolfish skins, and save the sheep.  
*Tries to seize* LOLLIO
- LOLLIO Is't come to this? Nay, then my poison comes  
forth again (*Shows the whip*): mad slave indeed—  
abuse your keeper!
- ISABELLA I prithee, hence with him, now he grows  
dangerous.
- FRANCISCUS  
(*Sings*) *Sweet love, pity me;  
Give me leave to lie with thee.*
- LOLLIO No, I'll see you wiser first. To your own kennel!
- FRANCISCUS No noise, she sleeps; draw all the curtains  
round,  
Let no soft sound molest the pretty soul 100  
But love, and love creeps in at a mouse-hole.
- LOLLIO I would you would get into your hole!  
(*Exit* FRANCISCUS) Now, mistress, I will bring you  
another sort: you shall be fooled another while.—  
Tony, come hither, Tony! Look who's yonder, Tony.
- Enter* ANTONIO
- ANTONIO Cousin, is it not my aunt?
- LOLLIO Yes, 'tis one of 'em, Tony.
- ANTONIO He, he! How do you, uncle?
- LOLLIO Fear him not, mistress, 'tis a gentle nigget; you  
may play with him, as safely with him as with his  
bauble. 111
- ISABELLA How long hast thou been a fool?
- ANTONIO Ever since I came hither, cousin.
- ISABELLA Cousin? I'm none of thy cousins, fool.
- LOLLIO O mistress, fools have always so much wit as to  
claim their kindred.
- MADMAN (*within*) Bounce, bounce! He falls, he falls!
- ISABELLA Hark you, your scholars in the upper room  
Are out of order. 119
- LOLLIO Must I come amongst you there?—Keep you  
the fool, mistress; I'll go up and play left-handed  
Orlando amongst the madmen. *Exit*
- ISABELLA Well, sir.
- ANTONIO 'Tis opportuneful now, sweet lady! Nay,  
Cast no amazing eye upon this change.
- ISABELLA Ha!
- ANTONIO This shape of folly shrouds your dearest love,  
The truest servant to your powerful beauties,

67 Aesculapius: the Greek god of medicine

69 Tiresias: the blind prophet of Thebes who changed from man to woman and back to man again after seven years. Juno blinded him for revealing that woman derived more pleasure from sex than men did

71 wild-geese: prostitutes

74 make no words on't: 'don't get alarmed by this'

81 an eye: a) perception; b) vagina

83 Luna: the moon, a source of madness (hence the term 'lunatics')

two trades: i.e. madness and blindness

85 big-bellied: a) full; b) pregnant

86 ride: a) move; b) copulate with  
Hecate: the Greek goddess of witchcraft, associated in classical mythology with the moon

88 the dog . . . the bush: the Man in the Moon was said to own a dog and a bush

90 lycanthropi: those suffering from lycanthropia saw themselves as wolves (see Ferdinand in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614))

97 *lie*: copulate

101 love creeps . . . mouse-hole: 'creeps' is an innuendo for sexual entry, 'mouse' can mean a beloved woman and 'hole' is an obscene word for vagina

102 hole: cell (but also an obscene image)

106 aunt: can also mean prostitute

108 uncle: can also mean pander, pimp

109 nigget: contraction of 'an idiot'

111 bauble: a) a jester's baton; b) penis

114 cousins: Isabella takes Antonio's 'cousin' to mean 'strumpet' or 'lover'

121 left-handed Orlando: meaning unclear. Orlando was the love-mad, violent protagonist in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and 'left-handed' implies ineptitude

124 opportuneful: seasonal

125 amazing: amazed

change: of attitude

127 shape: guise

shrouds: a) conceals; b) disguises



Whose magic had this force thus to transform me.

ISABELLA You are a fine fool indeed.

ANTONIO O 'tis not strange!

Love has an intellect that runs through all  
The scrutinous sciences, and, like a cunning poet,  
Catches a quantity of every knowledge,  
Yet brings all home into one mystery,  
Into one secret, that he proceeds in.

ISABELLA Yare a parlous fool.

ANTONIO No danger in me; I bring nought but love  
And his soft-wounding shafts to strike you with.

Try but one arrow; if it hurt you, I  
Will stand you twenty back in recompense. **140**

*Kisses her*

ISABELLA A forward fool too!

ANTONIO This was love's teaching:

A thousand ways he fashioned out my way,  
And this I found the safest and the nearest  
To tread the Galaxia to my star.

ISABELLA Profound withal! Certain you dreamed of this;  
Love never taught it waking.

ANTONIO Take no acquaintance

Of these outward follies. There is within  
A gentleman that loves you.

ISABELLA When I see him

I'll speak with him; so in the meantime keep  
Your habit, it becomes you well enough.

As you are a gentleman, I'll not discover you;  
That's all the favour that you must expect.

When you are weary, you may leave the school,  
For all this while you have but played the fool.

**150**

*Enter LOLLIO*

ANTONIO And must again.—He, he! I thank you,  
cousin;

I'll be your valentine tomorrow morning.

LOLLIO How do you like the fool, mistress?

ISABELLA Passing well, sir.

LOLLIO Is he not witty, pretty well, for a fool?

ISABELLA If he hold on as he begins, he is like

To come to something. **160**

LOLLIO Ay, thank a good tutor. You may put him to't;  
he begins to answer pretty hard questions.—Tony,  
how many is five times six?

ANTONIO Five times six is six times five.

LOLLIO What arithmetician could have answered  
better? How many is one hundred and seven?

ANTONIO One hundred and seven is seven hundred  
and one, cousin.

LOLLIO This is no wit to speak on!—Will you be rid of  
the fool now? **171**

ISABELLA By no means; let him stay a little.

MADMAN (*within*) Catch there, catch the last couple in  
hell!

LOLLIO Again! Must I come amongst you? Would my  
master were come home! I am not able to govern  
both these wards together. *Exit*

ANTONIO Why should a minute of love's hour be lost?

ISABELLA Fie, out again! I had rather you kept  
Your other posture; you become not your tongue **180**

When you speak from your clothes.

ANTONIO How can he freeze

Lives near such a warmth? Shall I alone

Walk through the orchard of the Hesperides

And cowardly not dare to pull an apple?

This with the red cheeks I must venture for.

*Kisses her*

*Enter LOLLIO above*

ISABELLA Take heed, there's giants keep 'em.

LOLLIO (*Aside*) How now, fool, are you good at that?

Have you read Lipsius? He's past *Ars Amandi*; I  
believe I must put harder questions to him, I perceive  
that— **190**

132 scrutinous: searching  
cunning: clever and artful  
134 mystery: skill known to masters and apprentices (as with  
the guilds of craftsmen responsible for the Mystery plays)  
135 secret: can also mean 'secret part'  
proceeds: a) mentally; b) sexually  
138 soft-wounding shafts: of Cupid  
strike: with an innuendo of copulate  
140 stand: give (as payment)  
141 forward: a) impudent; b) lustful  
142 fashioned out: contrived  
my way: my approach (towards Isabella)  
144 Galaxia: Milky Way  
145 Profound withal!: ingenious, as well!  
150 habit: dress (of a fool)  
151 discover: reveal, uncover  
152 all the favour: i.e. rather than a sexual favour  
156 valentine tomorrow morning: probably a reference to  
Ophelia's song in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (IV.v.47–54)

158 passing: exceedingly  
160–1 If he . . . to something: a) he may achieve some level of  
learning if he persists; b) he may achieve orgasm  
173–4 Catch there . . . in hell!: reference to 'barley-break', a  
traditional game in which couples attempt to run past  
other players (representing hell) without being caught  
179 out: i.e. out of role  
181 from: out of keeping with  
182 Lives: who lives  
183 the Hesperides: the dragon Ladon (offspring of a giant)  
guarded the tree on which the golden apples of the  
Hesperides grew; it was one of the tasks of Hercules to  
slay it  
184 pull: pick  
186 giants: i.e. guardians (meaning Lollo and Alibius)  
188 Lipsius: Julius Lipsius (1547–1606), a scholar famous for  
his inconstancy (changing religious affiliation a number  
of times throughout his life); also a play on 'lips'  
*Ars Amandi: The Art of Loving*, a treatise by Ovid

ISABELLA You are bold without fear too.  
ANTONIO What should I  
fear,

Having all joys about me? Do you smile,  
And love shall play the wanton on your lip,  
Meet and retire, retire and meet again;  
Look you but cheerfully, and in your eyes  
I shall behold mine own deformity,  
And dress myself up fairer. I know this shape  
Becomes me no, but in those bright mirrors  
I shall array me handsomely.

LOLLIO (*Aside*) Cuckoo, cuckoo—

*Enter* MADMEN *above, some as birds, others as beasts.*

ANTONIO What are these?

ISABELLA Of fear enough to part us,  
Yet are they but our schools of lunatics  
That act their fantasies in any shapes  
Suiting their present thoughts: if sad, they cry;  
If mirth be their conceit they laugh again;  
Sometimes they imitate the beasts and birds,  
Singing or howling, braying, barking—all  
As their wild fancies prompt 'em.

*Exeunt* MADMEN *above*

*Enter* LOLLIO

ANTONIO These are no fears.

ISABELLA But here's a large one—my man.

ANTONIO Ha, he! That's fine sport indeed, cousin! 210

LOLLIO I would my master were come home! 'Tis too  
much for one shepherd to govern two of these flocks.  
Nor can I believe that one churchman can instruct  
two benefices at once: there will be some incurable  
mad of the one side, and very fools on the other.—  
Come, Tony.

ANTONIO Prithee, cousin, let me stay here still.

LOLLIO No, you must to your book now; you have  
played sufficiently.

ISABELLA Your fool is grown wondrous witty. 220

LOLLIO Well, I'll say nothing, but I do not think but he

will put you down one of these days.

*Exeunt* LOLLIO *and* ANTONIO

ISABELLA Here the restrained current might make  
breach,  
Spite of the watchful bankers. Would a woman stray,  
She need not gad abroad to seek her sin,  
It would be brought home one ways or other:  
The needle's point will to the fixed north,  
Such drawing arctics women's beauties are.

*Enter* LOLLIO

LOLLIO How dost thou, sweet rogue?

ISABELLA How now?

230

LOLLIO Come, there are degrees: one fool may be  
better than another.

ISABELLA What's the matter?

LOLLIO Nay, if thou giv'st thy mind to fool's flesh, have  
at thee! *Tries to kiss her*

ISABELLA You bold slave, you!

LOLLIO I could follow now as t'other fool did:

'What should I fear,  
Having all joys about me? Do you but smile,  
And love shall play the wanton on your lip, 240

Meet and retire, retire and meet again;  
Look you but cheerfully, and in your eyes

I shall behold my own deformity,

And dress myself up fairer. I know this shape

Becomes me not—

And so as it follows; but is not this the more foolish

way? Come, sweet rogue, kiss me, my little

Lacedaemonian. Let me feel how thy pulses beat.

Thou hast a thing about thee would do a man

pleasure—I'll lay my hand on't. 250

ISABELLA Sirrah, no more! I see you have discovered

This love's knight-errant, who hath made adventure

For purchase of my love. Be silent, mute,

Mute as a statue, or his injunction

For me enjoying shall be to cut thy throat:

192 Do you smile: do but smile

193 the wanton: lasciviously

197 shape: guise (of a fool)

198 bright mirrors: Isabella's eyes

200 Cuckoo: the cry suggests 'cuckold' (i.e. Alibius)

201 of fear: frightening

203 fantasies: a) delusions; b) imagined things

205 conceit: fancy

209 my man: Lollio (her servant)

213–14 one churchman . . . two benefices: referring to the  
practice of clergy who derived their income from two or  
more churches (considered disreputable in the  
seventeenth century)

215 of: on

222 put you down: a) outwit in argument; b) copulate with

224 bankers: builders of dikes, levees

226 brought home: delivered

227 needle's point: of the compass, but with phallic

implications

will: will move

228 drawing arctics: magnetic poles

237 I could . . . fool did: 'having overheard you, I can play

your part' (Kinney)

246 this: Lollio's own way (more straightforward)

248 Lacedaemonian: a) someone given to understatement;

b) prostitute (implying that prostitutes do not talk much).

Let me . . . pulses beat: sexual innuendo

249 thing: vagina

250 lay: a) place; b) bet

253 purchase: reward

I'll do it, though for no other purpose, and  
 Be sure he'll not refuse it.  
 LOLLIO My share, that's all! I'll have my fool's part with  
 you.  
 ISABELLA No more! Your master. 259  
*Enter* ALIBIUS

ALIBIUS Sweet, how dost thou?  
 ISABELLA Your bounden servant, sir.  
 ALIBIUS Fie, fie, sweetheart,  
 No more of that.

ISABELLA You were best lock me up.  
 ALIBIUS In my arms and bosom, my sweet Isabella,  
 I'll lock thee up most nearly!—Lollo, We have employment, we have task in hand.  
 At noble Vermandero's, our castle-captain,  
 There is a nuptial to be solemnized—  
 Beatrice Joanna, his fair daughter, bride—  
 For which the gentleman hath bespoke our pains;  
 A mixture of our madmen and our fools, 270  
 To finish, as it were, and make the fag  
 Of all the revels, the third night from the first.  
 Only an unexpected passage over,  
 To make a frightful pleasure, that is all—  
 But not the all I aim at. Could we so act it  
 To teach it in a wild, distracted measure,  
 Though out of form and figure, breaking time's head,  
 It were no matter ('twould be healed again  
 In one age or other, if not in this):  
 This, this Lollo, there's a good reward begun, 280  
 And will beget a bounty, be it known.  
 LOLLIO This is easy, sir, I'll warrant you. You have  
 about you fools and madmen that can dance very  
 well; and 'tis no wonder: your best dancers are not the  
 wisest men—the reason is, with often jumping they  
 jolt their brains down into their feet, that their wits  
 lie more in their heels than in their heads.

256 no other purpose: i.e. to have Alibius rid me of you  
 261 bounden: a) duty-bound; b) confined (sarcastically)  
 262 lock me up: in a chastity belt (although Alibius does not  
 catch this allusion)  
 264 most nearly: a) intimately; b) more securely  
 269 bespoke our pains: commissioned our help  
 271 fag: last part  
 273–4 Only an . . . is all: the madmen and fools are to rush  
 across in front of the revellers, giving them a pleasant  
 fright  
 275–81 Could we . . . it known: 'If only we could so perform it  
 as to teach them to do it by means of a wild, crazy dance,  
 then that, though not according to proper form and  
 pattern, making a cuckold of the musical rhythm, would  
 not be objected to (for it would be remedied at some  
 future stage if not now) . . . such a thing, Lollo, would  
 be the beginning of a good reward and generate bountiful  
 commissions for the future, if it became widely known'  
 (Daalder)

ALIBIUS Honest Lollo, thou giv'st me a good reason,  
 And a comfort in it.  
 ISABELLA Y'have a fine trade on't;  
 Madmen and fools are a staple commodity. 290  
 ALIBIUS O wife, we must eat, wear clothes, and live;  
 Just at the lawyer's haven we arrive,  
 By madmen and by fools we both do thrive.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene iv

*Enter* VERMANDERO, ALSEMERO, JASPERINO, and  
 BEATRICE

VERMANDERO Valencia speaks so nobly of you, sir,  
 I wish I had a daughter now for you.  
 ALSEMERO The fellow of this creature were a partner  
 For a king's love.  
 VERMANDERO I had her fellow once, sir,  
 But heaven has married her to joys eternal;  
 'Twere sin to wish her in this vale again.  
 Come, sir, your friend and you shall see the pleasures  
 Which my health chiefly joys in.  
 ALSEMERO I hear the beauty of this seat largely.  
 VERMANDERO It falls much short of that.

*Exeunt. Manet* BEATRICE

BEATRICE So here's one step  
 Into my father's favour; time will fix him. II  
 I have got him now the liberty of the house.  
 So wisdom by degrees works out her freedom;  
 And if that eye be dark'ned that offends me  
 (I wait but that eclipse), this gentleman  
 Shall soon shine glorious in my father's liking  
 Through the refulgent virtue of my love.

*Enter* DE FLORES

DE FLORES (*Aside*) My thoughts are at a banquet for the  
 deed;  
 I feel no weight in't, 'tis but light and cheap

288 a good reason: i.e. for going ahead with the plan  
 292 lawyer's haven: a) referring to the idea that fools and  
 madmen often sought the services of lawyers (see  
 I.ii.168–9); b) lawyers are fools and madmen  
 3 fellow: match  
 4 fellow: i.e. Vermandero's late wife  
 6 vale: of tears, earthly life  
 8 health: well-being  
 9 seat: estate, property  
 largely: extensively reported upon  
 11 fix: establish (Alsemero)  
 14 if that . . . offends me: refers to the biblical idea that 'if  
 thine eye offend thee, pluck it out' (Matthew 18.9) with  
 Alonzo as the 'eye'  
 17 refulgent: radiant  
 18 banquet: celebration  
 the deed: the killing of Alonzo

For the sweet recompense that I set down for't. 20  
 BEATRICE De Flores?  
 DE FLORES Lady?  
 BEATRICE Thy looks promise cheerfully.  
 DE FLORES All things are answerable: time,  
 circumstance,  
 Your wishes, and my service.  
 BEATRICE Is it done then?  
 DE FLORES Piracquo is no more.  
 BEATRICE My joys start at mine eyes; our sweet'st  
 delights  
 Are evermore born weeping.  
 DE FLORES I've a token for you.  
 BEATRICE For me?  
 DE FLORES But it was sent somewhat unwillingly;  
 I could not get the ring without the finger.  
*Shows her the finger*  
 BEATRICE Bless me! What hast thou done?  
 DE FLORES Why, is that more  
 Than killing the whole man? I cut his heart-strings. 30  
 A greedy hand thrust in a dish at court  
 In a mistake hath had as much as this.  
 BEATRICE 'Tis the first token my father made me send  
 him.  
 DE FLORES And I have made him send it back again  
 For his last token. I was loath to leave it,  
 And I'm sure dead men have no use of jewels.  
 He was as loath to part with't, for it stuck  
 As if the flesh and it were both one substance.  
 BEATRICE At the stag's fall, the keeper has his fees;  
 'Tis soon applied: all dead men's fees are yours, sir. 40  
 I pray, bury the finger; but the stone  
 You may make use on shortly—the true value,  
 Take't of my truth, is near three hundred ducats.  
 DE FLORES 'Twill hardly buy a capcase for one's  
 conscience, though,  
 To keep it from the worm, as fine as 'tis.  
 Well, being my fees, I'll take it;

20 sweet recompense: in exchange for  
 set down: specified (as in an account)  
 22 answerable: fitting  
 26 token: a) of love; b) of the murder  
 31–2 A greedy . . . as this: De Flores notes that it is easy  
 enough to lose a finger in an accident, so it is nothing by  
 comparison to the killing of a whole man which is what  
 the finger and the ring are evidence of  
 36 jewels: can also mean a) signs of virginity; b) genitalia  
 38 one substance: in the biblical sense, like the union of  
 marriage which the ring had come to signify (see  
 Matthew 19.5)  
 39 keeper: gamekeeper, entitled to a share of a slaughtered  
 deer  
 44 capcase: travelling bag, wallet  
 45 worm: the gnawings of conscience

Great men have taught me that, or else my merit  
 Would scorn the way on't.  
 BEATRICE It might justly, sir.  
 Why, thou mistak'st, De Flores: 'tis not given  
 In state of recompense. 50  
 DE FLORES No, I hope so, lady;  
 You should soon witness my contempt to't then.  
 BEATRICE Prithee, thou look'st as if thou wert  
 offended.  
 DE FLORES That were strange, lady; 'tis not possible  
 My service should draw such a cause from you.  
 Offended? Could you think so? That were much  
 For one of my performance, and so warm  
 Yet in my service.  
 BEATRICE 'Twere misery in me to give you cause, sir.  
 DE FLORES I know so much, it were so: misery  
 In her most sharp condition.  
 BEATRICE 'Tis resolved then; 60  
 Look you, sir, here's three thousand golden florins:  
 I have not meanly thought upon thy merit.  
 DE FLORES What? Salary? Now you move me.  
 BEATRICE How, De Flores?  
 DE FLORES Do you place me in the rank of verminous  
 fellows,  
 To destroy things for wages? Offer gold  
 For the life blood of man! Is anything  
 Valued too precious for my recompense?  
 BEATRICE I understand thee not.  
 DE FLORES I could ha' hired  
 A journeyman in murder at this rate,  
 And mine own conscience might have had, and have  
 had 70  
 The work brought home.

47–8 Great men . . . way on't: great men have taught De  
 Flores to accept a material reward for his service,  
 although he claims his true merit is above such exchanges  
 50 In state of: by way of  
 54 cause: reproach  
 55–7 That were . . . my service: De Flores notes the gravity of  
 his 'performance' (the killing) and how recent it was  
 (against the notion of Beatrice's apparent reproach)  
 58 misery: ingratitude  
 59 misery: suffering  
 60 'tis resolved then: the misunderstanding is resolved  
 61 three thousand golden florins: gold coins (or a  
 promissory note, since this large sum would have  
 weighed a great deal)  
 62 meanly: ungenerously  
 63 Salary: financial reward  
 move: offend  
 66 Is anything: can anything be  
 68–71 I could . . . brought home: De Flores says that he could  
 have hired someone (a journeyman) to undertake the  
 murder so that he could have stayed at home and had the  
 'work' delivered, thus sparing his conscience direct  
 contact with the deed

BEATRICE (*Aside*) I'm in a labyrinth;  
 What will content him? I would fain be rid of him.  
 (*To DE FLORES*) I'll double the sum, sir.  
 DE FLORES You take a course  
 To double my vexation, that's the good you do.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) Bless me! I am now in worse plight  
 than I was:  
 I know not what will please him. (*To DE FLORES*)—  
 For my fears' sake,  
 I prithee make away with all speed possible.  
 And if thou be'st so modest not to name  
 The sum that will content thee, paper blushes not;  
 Send thy demand in writing, it shall follow thee 80  
 But prithee take thy flight.  
 DE FLORES You must fly too then.  
 BEATRICE I?  
 DE FLORES I'll not stir a foot else.  
 BEATRICE What's your meaning?  
 DE FLORES Why, are not you as guilty, in, I'm sure,  
 As deep as I? And we should stick together.  
 Come, your fears counsel you but ill: my absence  
 Would draw suspect upon you instantly;  
 There were no rescue for you.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) He speaks home.  
 DE FLORES Nor is it fit we two, engaged so jointly,  
 Should part and live asunder. *Tries to kiss her*  
 BEATRICE How now, sir?  
 This shows not well.  
 DE FLORES What makes your lip so strange? 90  
 This must not be 'twixt us.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) The man talks wildly.  
 DE FLORES Come, kiss me with a zeal now.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) Heaven, I doubt him!  
 DE FLORES I will not stand so long to beg 'em shortly.  
 BEATRICE Take heed, De Flores, of forgetfulness,  
 'Twill soon betray us.  
 DE FLORES Take you heed first;  
 Faith, y'are grown much forgetful, y'are to blame  
 in't.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) He's bold, and I am blamed for't!  
 DE FLORES I have eased you

Of your trouble; think on't. I'm in pain  
 And must be eased of you; 'tis a charity.  
 Justice invites your blood to understand me. 100  
 BEATRICE I dare not.  
 DE FLORES Quickly!  
 BEATRICE O, I never shall!  
 Speak it yet further off, that I may lose  
 What has been spoken, and no sound remain on't.  
 I would not hear so much offence again  
 For such another deed.  
 DE FLORES Soft, lady, soft!  
 The last is not yet paid for. O, this act  
 Has put me into spirit: I was as greedy on't  
 As the parched earth of moisture, when the clouds  
 weep.  
 Did you not mark, I wrought myself into't,  
 Nay, sued and kneeled for't? Why was all that pains  
 took? 110  
 You see I have thrown contempt upon your gold:  
 Not that I want it not, for I do piteously—  
 In order I will come unto't, and make use on't—  
 But 'twas not held so precious to begin with,  
 For I place wealth after the heels of pleasure;  
 And were I not resolved in my belief  
 That thy virginity were perfect in thee,  
 I should but take my recompense with grudging,  
 As if I had but half my hopes I agreed for.  
 BEATRICE Why, 'tis impossible thou canst be so  
 wicked, 120  
 Or shelter such a cunning cruelty,  
 To make his death the murderer of my honour!  
 Thy language is so bold and vicious,  
 I cannot see which way I can forgive it  
 With any modesty.  
 DE FLORES Push, you forget yourself!  
 A woman dipped in blood, and talk of modesty?  
 BEATRICE O misery of sin! Would I had been bound  
 Perpetually unto my living hate

77 make away: flee  
 84 stick together: a) as partners in crime; b) as the finger and the ring  
 86 suspect: suspicion  
 87 home: a) directly; b) truthfully  
 88 engaged so jointly: bound together in the crime (but with play on the sense of betrothal)  
 90 strange: unfriendly, distant  
 92 doubt: fear, distrust  
 93 I will . . . 'em shortly: soon I shall refuse to wait for so long, begging for your kisses  
 94 forgetfulness: of her superior social rank  
 forgetful: of her complicity and her obligation to him

98 in pain: caused by sexual desire  
 99 eased: sexually relieved  
 charity: gift to someone sexually deprived  
 100 blood: sexuality, passions  
 understand: satisfy  
 102 lose: forget  
 104 offence: offensive suggestions  
 105 such another: any such  
 Soft: 'slow down' or 'wait a moment'  
 106 act: of blood  
 109 wrought: forced  
 113 In order: in due course  
 115 pleasure: sexual pleasure  
 122 his death: i.e. that of Alonzo  
 honour: chastity  
 126 modesty: De Flores weighs her complicity in murder against her concern for her female 'modesty' (implying also her virginity)

In that Piracquo, than to hear these words!  
 Think but upon the distance that creation  
 Set 'twixt thy blood and mine, and keep thee there. 130  
 DE FLORES Look but into your conscience, read me  
 there;  
 'Tis a true book, you'll find me there your equal.  
 Push, fly not to your birth, but settle you  
 In what the act has made you; y'are no more now.  
 You must forget your parentage to me:  
 Y'are the deed's creature; by that name you lost  
 Your first condition; and I challenge you  
 As peace and innocence has turned you out  
 And made you one with me.

BEATRICE With thee, foul villain?  
 DE FLORES Yes, my fair murd'ress. Do you urge me, 141  
 Though thou writ'st 'maid', thou whore in thy  
 affection?

'Twas changed from thy first love, and that's a kind  
 Of whoredom in thy heart; and he's changed now  
 To bring thy second on, thy Alsemero,  
 Whom (by all sweets that ever darkness tasted)  
 If I enjoy thee not, thou ne'er enjoy'st:  
 I'll blast the hopes and joys of marriage—  
 I'll confess all; my life I rate at nothing.

BEATRICE De Flores!  
 DE FLORES I shall rest from all lovers' plagues then; 150  
 I live in pain now: that shooting eye  
 Will burn my heart to cinders.

BEATRICE O sir, hear me!  
 DE FLORES She that in life and love refuses me,  
 In death and shame my partner she shall be.  
 BEATRICE Stay, hear me once for all. (*Kneels*)—I make  
 thee master  
 Of all the wealth I have in gold and jewels;  
 Let me go poor unto my bed with honour,  
 And I am rich in all things.

129 than: rather than

131 blood: social rank

133 equal: in terms of sin, which supersedes other forms of rank

136 to: in favour of

137 the deed's creature: a) shaped or recreated by the deed; b) enslaved to the deed

138 first condition: a) innocence; b) original state (in terms of family and rank)

139 turned you out: expelled you from that state (with play on the dismissal of Eve from Paradise)

141 urge: provoke me

142 writ'st 'maid': call yourself virgin  
 affection: passion

143 changed from thy first love: transferred (from Alonzo)

144 changed: from life to death (with emphasis on 'change' as in the title of the play)

146 sweets: sexual pleasures

150 plagues: torments

151 shooting eye: direct, provocative look

DE FLORES Let this silence thee:  
 The wealth of all Valencia shall not buy  
 My pleasure from me. 160  
 Can you weep fate from its determined purpose?  
 So soon may you weep me.

BEATRICE Vengeance begins;  
 Murder I see is followed by more sins.  
 Was my creation in the womb so curst  
 It must engender with a viper first?

DE FLORES Come, rise, and shroud your blushes in my  
 bosom. *Raises her*

Silence is one of pleasure's best receipts:  
 Thy peace is wrought for ever in this yielding.  
 'Las, how the turtle pants! Thou'lt love anon  
 What thou so fear'st and faint'st to venture on. 170  
*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene i

*Dumb show. Enter GENTLEMEN, VERMANDERO meeting them with action of wonderment at the flight of PIRACQUO.*

*Enter ALSEMERO, with JASPERINO and GALLANTS; VERMANDERO points to him, the GENTLEMEN seeming to applaud the choice. Exeunt in procession VERMANDERO, ALSEMERO, JASPERINO and GENTLEMEN. Enter BEATRICE, the bride, following in great state, accompanied with DIAPHANTA, ISABELLA, and other GENTLEWOMEN. Enter DE FLORES after all, smiling at the accident. ALONZO's ghost appears to DE FLORES in the midst of his smile; startles him, showing him the hand whose finger he had cut off. They pass over in great solemnity*

*Enter BEATRICE*

BEATRICE This fellow has undone me endlessly:  
 Never was bride so fearfully distressed.  
 The more I think upon th'ensuing night,  
 And whom I am to cope with in embraces—  
 One who's ennobled both in blood and mind,  
 So clear in understanding (that's my plague now),  
 Before whose judgement will my fault appear  
 Like malefactors' crimes before tribunals  
 (There is no hiding on't)—the more I dive  
 Into my own distress. How a wise man 10

162 Vengeance: the consequences of sin

164–5 Was my . . . viper first?: i.e. was my birth so cursed that I should copulate with a viper first? (before a man)

167 receipts: recipes

169 turtle: turtle dove (known to protect its mate)

anon: at once

1 fellow: someone of lower rank

undone: a) ruined; b) ravished

2 distressed: a) anxious; b) deprived (sexually, as a bride)

4 cope: contend (but with play on 'copulate')

5 One: i.e. Alsemero

Stands for a great calamity! There's no venturing  
 Into his bed, what course so'er I light upon,  
 Without my shame, which may grow up to danger.  
 He cannot but in justice strangle me  
 As I lie by him, as a cheater use me;  
 'Tis a precious craft to play with a false die  
 Before a cunning gamester. Here's his closet,  
 The key left in't, and he abroad i'th'park;  
 Sure 'twas forgot, I'll be so bold as look in't.

*Opens closet*

Bless me! A right physician's closet 'tis, **20**  
 Set round with vials, every one her mark too.  
 Sure he does practise physic for his own use,  
 Which may be safely called your great man's wisdom.  
 What manuscript lies here? 'The Book of  
 Experiment,  
 Called *Secrets in Nature*'; so 'tis, 'tis so  
 'How to know whether a woman be with child or no.'  
 I hope I am not yet; if he should try though!  
 Let me see: 'folio forty-five.' Here 'tis;  
 The leaf tucked down upon't, the place suspicious.  
 'If you would know whether a woman be with child  
 or not, give her two spoonfuls of the white water in  
 glass C—' Where's that glass C? O, yonder, I see't  
 now—and if she be with child, she sleeps full twelve  
 hours after; if not, not.' **34**  
 None of that water comes into my belly:  
 I'll know you from a hundred. I could break you now,  
 Or turn you into milk, and so beguile  
 The master of the mystery, but I'll look to you.  
 Ha! That which is next is ten times worse:  
 'How to know whether a woman be a maid or not.' **40**  
 If that should be applied, what would become of me?

11 Stands for: represents (because he will be hard to deceive)  
 13 grow up to danger: increase to produce danger  
 15 use: copulate with  
 16 precious: risky (because obtainable only at great cost)  
 17 closet: small private room  
 20 right: true, veritable  
 21 vials: small bottles for medicines or chemicals  
 her mark: its label  
 22-3 for his . . . man's wisdom: the medicine is to protect  
 Alsemero against poison  
 25 *Secrets in Nature*: or *De Arcanis Naturae* by Antonius  
 Mizaldus (1520-78). Although this text does not include  
 the virginity tests used in this play such tests could be  
 found in similar works. The title usefully represents the  
 secretive and suspicious nature of Alsemero's interests  
 (which correspond to those of Alibius in the sub-plot)  
 31 water: medicinal liquid  
 32 glass: a vial or other container  
 36 you: i.e. glass C  
 37 Or turn you into milk: by changing the contents or the  
 label  
 38 mystery: secret  
 look to: watch out for

Belike he has a strong faith of my purity,  
 That never yet made proof; but this he calls  
 'A merry sleight, but true experiment, the author  
 Antonius Mizaldus. Give the party you suspect the  
 quantity of a spoonful of the water in the glass M,  
 which upon her that is a maid makes three several  
 effects: 'twill make her incontinently gape, then fall  
 into a sudden sneezing, last into a violent laughing;  
 else dull, heavy, and lumpish.' **50**

Where had I been?

I fear it, yet 'tis seven hours to bedtime.

*Enter DIAPHANTA*

DIAPHANTA Cuds, madam, are you here?  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) Seeing that wench now  
 A trick comes in my mind; 'tis a nice piece  
 Gold cannot purchase. (*To DIAPHANTA*) I come  
 hither, wench,  
 To look my lord.

DIAPHANTA (*Aside*) Would I had such a cause  
 To look him too! (*To BEATRICE*) Why, he's i'th'park,  
 madam.

BEATRICE There let him be.

DIAPHANTA Ay, madam, let him compass  
 Whole parks and forests, as great rangers do;  
 At roosting time a little lodge can hold 'em. **60**

Earth-conquering Alexander, that thought the world  
 Too narrow for him, in the end had but his pit-hole.

BEATRICE I fear thou art not modest, Diaphanta.

DIAPHANTA Your thoughts are so unwilling to be  
 known, madam;

'Tis ever the bride's fashion towards bed-time  
 To set light by her joys, as if she owed 'em not.

BEATRICE Her joys? Her fears, thou would'st say.

DIAPHANTA Fear of what?

BEATRICE Art thou a maid, and talk'st so to a maid?

42-3 Belike he . . . made proof: 'perhaps, not having tested  
 my purity, he has strong faith in it and will therefore not  
 proceed to do so (ironic in several ways)' (Daalder)

44 sleight: trick

48 incontinently gape: yawn immediately and uncontrollably

51 Where had I been?: i.e. where would I have been had I  
 not discovered all this?

53 Cuds: God's (mild oath)

54 a nice piece: i.e. an exceptionally principled girl that

57 look: look for

58 compass: ride around

59 parks: colloquial for female bodies

rangers: a) keepers of parks; b) penises

60 lodge: can also mean vagina

61 Alexander: Alexander the Great (356-323 BC)

62 pit-hole: a) grave; b) vagina

64 Your thoughts . . . be known: Diaphanta implies that  
 Beatrice's secret thoughts may well be similarly unchaste

66 owed: owned

68 maid: virgin

- You leave a blushing business behind,  
Beshrew your heart for't!
- DIAPHANTA Do you mean good sooth, madam? 70
- BEATRICE Well, if I'd thought upon the fear at first,  
Man should have been unknown.
- DIAPHANTA Is't possible?
- BEATRICE I will give a thousand ducats to that woman  
Would try what my fear were, and tell me true  
Tomorrow, when she gets from't; as she likes  
I might perhaps be drawn to't.
- DIAPHANTA Are you in earnest?
- BEATRICE Do you get the woman, then challenge me,  
And see if I'll fly from't. But I must tell you  
This by the way: she must be a true maid,  
Else there's no trial, my fears are not hers else. 80
- DIAPHANTA Nay, she that I would put into your hands,  
madam,  
Shall be a maid.
- BEATRICE You know I should be shamed else,  
Because she lies for me.
- DIAPHANTA 'Tis a strange humour!  
But are you serious still? Would you resign  
Your first night's pleasure, and give money too?
- BEATRICE As willingly as live. (*Aside*)—Alas, the gold  
Is but a by-bet to wedge in the honour.
- DIAPHANTA (*Aside*) I do not know how the world goes  
abroad  
For faith or honesty; there's both required in this.—  
Madam, what say you to me, and stray no further? 90  
I've a good mind, in troth, to earn your money.
- BEATRICE Yare too quick, I fear, to be a maid.
- DIAPHANTA How? Not a maid? Nay, then you urge  
me, madam!  
Your honourable self is not a truer,  
With all your fears upon you—
- BEATRICE (*Aside*) Bad enough then.
- DIAPHANTA Than I with all my lightsome joys about  
me.
- 
- 69 You leave . . . business behind: Diaphanta's words make Beatrice blush
- 70 good sooth: truth (i.e. are you serious?)
- 72 Man should have been unknown: a) she would have wished men did not exist; b) she would never know a man
- 74 try: experience
- 75 when she gets from't: when she removes herself from intercourse
- 77 challenge me: demand the money from me
- 83 lies: a) tells lies; b) substitutes; lies down (to make love)
- 87 by-bet: extra incentive (literally, a side-bet)
- 88–9 I do . . . or honesty: 'I do not know how much faith or honesty can be found in the world nowadays' (Bawcutt)
- 92 quick: lively (sexually)
- 93 urge: provoke
- 96 lightsome: lighthearted
- BEATRICE I'm glad to hear't. Then you dare put your  
honesty  
Upon an easy trial?
- DIAPHANTA Easy?—Anything.
- BEATRICE I'll come to you straight. *Goes to the closet*
- DIAPHANTA (*Aside*) She will not search  
me, will she,  
Like the forewoman of a female jury? 100
- BEATRICE (*Aside*) Glass M: ay, this is it.—Look,  
Diaphanta,  
You take no worse than I do. *Drinks*
- DIAPHANTA And in so doing,  
I will not question what it is, but take it. *Drinks*
- BEATRICE (*Aside*) Now if the experiment be true, twill  
praise itself,  
And give me noble ease.—Begins already:  
*DIAPHANTA gapes*  
There's the first symptom. And what haste it makes  
To fall into the second, there by this time!  
*DIAPHANTA sneezes*  
Most admirable secret!—On the contrary,  
It stirs not me a whit, which most concerns it.
- DIAPHANTA Ha, ha, ha!
- BEATRICE (*Aside*) Just in all things, and in order  
As if 'twere circumscribed; one accident 111  
Gives way unto another.
- DIAPHANTA Ha, ha, ha!
- BEATRICE How now, wench?
- DIAPHANTA Ha, ha, ha! I am so—so light  
At heart! Ha, ha, ha!—So pleasurable!  
But one swig more, sweet madam.
- BEATRICE Ay, tomorrow;  
We shall have time to sit by't.
- DIAPHANTA Now I'm sad again.
- BEATRICE (*Aside*) It lays itself so gently too! (*To*  
*DIAPHANTA*) Come, wench;  
Most honest Diaphanta I dare call thee now.
- DIAPHANTA Pray tell me, madam, what trick call you  
this?
- BEATRICE I'll tell thee all hereafter; we must study 120  
The carriage of this business.
- DIAPHANTA I shall carry't well,  
Because I love the burden.
- BEATRICE About midnight
- 
- 99–100 She will . . . female jury: 1613 saw the case of the Countess of Essex who sued for divorce on the grounds of non-consummation and was examined by a group of women
- 104 praise itself: show its worth
- 111 circumscribed: as if written in a circle (as on a coin) and therefore in a neat sequence
- accident: symptom, effect
- 116 by't: and enjoy it
- 117 lays itself: subsides
- 121 carriage: management



You must not fail to steal forth gently,  
That I may use the place.

DIAPHANTA O fear not, madam;  
I shall be cool by that time. (*Aside*) The bride's place,  
And with a thousand ducats! I'm for a justice now:  
I bring a portion with me; I scorn small fools.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene ii

*Enter VERMANDERO and SERVANT*

VERMANDERO I tell thee, knave, mine honour is in  
question,

A thing till now free from suspicion,  
Nor ever was there cause. Who of my gentlemen  
Are absent? Tell me, and truly, how many and who.

SERVANT Antonio, sir, and Franciscus.

VERMANDERO When did they leave the castle?

SERVANT Some ten days since, sir, the one intending to  
Briamata, th'other for Valencia.

VERMANDERO The time accuses 'em. A charge of  
murder

Is brought within my castle gate, Piracquo's murder;  
I dare not answer faithfully their absence. **II**

A strict command of apprehension  
Shall pursue 'em suddenly, and either wipe  
The stain off clear, or openly discover it.  
Provide me winged warrants for the purpose.

*Exit SERVANT*

See, I am set on again.

*Enter TOMAZO*

TOMAZO I claim a brother of you.

VERMANDERO Y'are too hot;  
Seek him not here.

TOMAZO Yes, 'mongst your dearest bloods,  
If my peace find no fairer satisfaction.

This is the place must yield account for him, **20**  
For here I left him; and the hasty tie  
Of this snatched marriage gives strong testimony  
Of his most certain ruin.

VERMANDERO Certain falsehood!  
This is the place indeed: his breach of faith  
Has too much marred both my abused love—

The honourable love I reserved for him—  
And mocked my daughter's joy. The prepared  
morning  
Blushed at his infidelity; he left  
Contempt and scorn to throw upon those friends  
Whose belief hurt 'em. O, 'twas most ignoble **30**  
To take his flight so unexpectedly,  
And throw such public wrongs on those that loved  
him!

TOMAZO Then this is all your answer?

VERMANDERO 'Tis too fair

For one of his alliance, and I warn you  
That this place no more see you. *Exit*

*Enter DE FLORES*

TOMAZO The best is,  
There is more ground to meet a man's revenge on.—  
Honest De Flores?

DE FLORES That's my name indeed.

Saw you the bride? Good sweet sir, which way took  
she?

TOMAZO I have blest mine eyes from seeing such a false  
one.

DE FLORES (*Aside*) I'd fain get off, this man's not for  
my company: **40**

I smell his brother's blood when I come near him.

TOMAZO Come hither, kind and true one; I remember  
My brother loved thee well.

DE FLORES O purely, dear sir!  
(*Aside*)—Methinks I am now again a-killing on him,  
He brings it so fresh to me.

TOMAZO Thou canst guess, sirrah—  
One honest friend has an instinct of jealousy—  
At some foul guilty person?

DE FLORES 'Las, sir, I am so charitable, I think none  
Worse than myself.—You did not see the bride then?

TOMAZO I prithee, name her not. Is she not wicked? **50**

DE FLORES No, no: a pretty, easy, round-packed sinner,  
As your most ladies are (else you might think  
I flattered her), but, sir, at no hand wicked,  
Till th'are so old their chins and noses meet,  
And they salute witches.—I am called, I think, sir.

30 belief: mistaken confidence

33 fair: kind

34 alliance: lineage

36 There is . . . revenge on: 'there are other ways to pursue  
revenge'

46 instinct of jealousy: intuitive suspicion

51 easy: of easy virtue

round-packed: full-figured, shapely

53 at no hand: by no means

54 chins and noses: Q has 'sins and noses'. We follow the  
usual emendation

55 salute: a) are called; b) greet (as they look like witches  
themselves)

125 cool: sexually satisfied

126-7 I'm for . . . small fools: a justice is seen as a desirable  
'big fool' now that she has a dowry (portion)

8 Briamata: Vermandero's country estate

11 answer faithfully: explain in good faith

12 apprehension: arrest

14 discover: reveal

16 set on: harassed (seeing Tomazo arrive)

18 bloods: kin

25 marred: tainted

(*Aside*)—His company ev'n o'erlays my conscience. *Exit*

TOMAZO That De Flores has a wondrous honest heart;  
He'll bring it out in time, I'm assured on't.  
O, here's the glorious master of the day's joy.  
'Twill not be long till he and I do reckon. **60**

*Enter* ALSEMERO

Sir!  
ALSEMERO You are most welcome.  
TOMAZO You may call that word back:  
I do not think I am, nor wish to be.  
ALSEMERO 'Tis strange you found the way to this house  
then.  
TOMAZO Would I'd ne'er known the cause! I'm none of  
those, sir,  
That come to give you joy, and swill your wine;  
'Tis a more precious liquor that must lay  
The fiery thirst I bring.  
ALSEMERO Your words and you  
Appear to me great strangers.  
TOMAZO Time and our swords  
May make us more acquainted. This the business:—  
I should have had a brother in your place; **70**  
How treachery and malice have disposed of him  
I'm bound to enquire of him which holds his right,  
Which never could come fairly.  
ALSEMERO You must look  
To answer for that word, sir.  
TOMAZO Fear you not;  
I'll have it ready drawn at our next meeting.  
Keep your day solemn. Farewell, I disturb it not;  
I'll bear the smart with patience for a time. *Exit*  
ALSEMERO 'Tis somewhat ominous, this: a quarrel  
ent'red  
Upon this day. My innocence relieves me;

*Enter* JASPERINO

I should be wondrous sad else.—Jasperino, **80**  
I have news to tell thee, strange news.  
JASPERINO I ha' some too,  
I think as strange as yours. Would I might keep

56 o'erlays my conscience: oppresses my mind  
58 bring it out: a) reveal his 'honest heart'; b) reveal the  
identity of the killer  
59 glorious: a scornful term, as in vainglorious, proud  
60 reckon: settle (our account)  
66 liquor: i.e. blood  
lay: allay, quench  
72 his right: as husband to Beatrice (in place of Alonzo)  
74 that word: the accusation  
75 it: a sword (as answer)  
76 Keep your day solemn: i.e. observe the rituals of your  
wedding day  
77 smart: pain

Mine, so my faith and friendship might be kept in't!  
Faith, sir, dispense a little with my zeal,  
And let it cool in this.  
ALSEMERO This puts me on,  
And blames thee for thy slowness.  
JASPERINO All may prove nothing,  
Only a friendly fear that leapt from me, sir.  
ALSEMERO No question it may prove nothing; let's  
partake it though.  
JASPERINO 'Twas Diaphanta's chance—for to that  
wench  
I pretend honest love, and she deserves it— **90**  
To leave me in a back part of the house,  
A place we chose for private conference;  
She was no sooner gone but instantly  
I heard your bride's voice in the next room to me,  
And, lending more attention, found De Flores  
Louder than she.  
ALSEMERO De Flores? Thou art out now.  
JASPERINO You'll tell me more anon.  
ALSEMERO Still I'll prevent thee;  
The very sight of him is poison to her.  
JASPERINO That made me stagger too, but Diaphanta  
At her return confirmed it.  
ALSEMERO Diaphanta! **100**  
JASPERINO Then fell we both to listen, and words  
passed  
Like those that challenge interest in a woman—  
ALSEMERO Peace, quench thy zeal; 'tis dangerous to thy  
bosom.  
JASPERINO Then truth is full of peril.  
ALSEMERO Such truths are.—  
O, were she the sole glory of the earth,  
Had eyes that could shoot fire into kings' breasts,  
And touched, she sleeps not here! Yet I have time,  
Though night be near, to be resolved hereof;  
And prithee do not weigh me by my passions.  
JASPERINO I never weighed friend so.  
ALSEMERO Done charitably.

83 so: provided that  
84-5 dispense a . . . in this: allow my zealous service to 'cool' a  
little (so that I should not have to relay this news)  
puts me on: provokes me  
88 partake: share  
90 pretend: offer  
honest: a) genuine; b) chaste (Diaphanta is still a virgin)  
92 private conference: as in a lovers' meeting  
96 out: mistaken  
97 tell me more: speak differently (when more of the story is  
revealed)  
97 prevent: forestall  
102 challenge: claim  
107 touched: unchaste  
108 resolved: satisfied  
109 weigh: judge

That key will lead thee to a pretty secret, *Gives key*  
 By a Chaldean taught me, and I've made **112**  
 My study upon some. Bring from my closet  
 A glass inscribed there with the letter M,  
 And question not my purpose.  
 JASPERINO It shall be done, sir. *Exit*  
 ALSEMERO How can this hang together? Not an hour  
 since,  
 Her woman came pleading her lady's fears,  
 Delivered her for the most timorous virgin  
 That ever shrunk at man's name, and so modest,  
 She charged her weep out her request to me, **120**  
 That she might come obscurely to my bosom.

*Enter* BEATRICE

BEATRICE (*Aside*) All things go well. My woman's  
 preparing yonder  
 For her sweet voyage, which grieves me to lose;  
 Necessity compels it, I lose all else.  
 ALSEMERO (*Aside*) Push, modesty's shrine is set in  
 yonder forehead.  
 I cannot be too sure, though. (*To her*)—My Joanna!  
 BEATRICE Sir, I was bold to weep a message to you;  
 Pardon my modest fears.  
 ALSEMERO (*Aside*) The dove's not meeker;  
 She's abused, questionless.

*Enter* JASPERINO *with glass*

—O, are you come, sir?  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) The glass, upon my life! I see the **130**  
 letter.  
 JASPERINO Sir, this is M.  
 ALSEMERO 'Tis it.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) I am suspected.  
 ALSEMERO How fitly our bride comes to partake with  
 us!  
 BEATRICE What is't, my lord?  
 ALSEMERO No hurt.  
 BEATRICE Sir, pardon me,  
 I seldom taste of any composition.  
 ALSEMERO But this, upon my warrant, you shall  
 venture on. *Gives her the glass*  
 BEATRICE I fear 'twill make me ill.  
 ALSEMERO Heaven forbid that.  
*Talks apart to* JASPERINO

111 pretty: ingenious  
 112 Chaldean: a seer or soothsayer (see Daniel 2.2)  
 113 some: i.e. secrets  
 118 Delivered her for: described her as  
 121 obscurely: a) in the dark; b) unseen  
 123 sweet voyage: her sexual encounter  
 129 She's abused, questionless: she's undoubtedly  
 maligned  
 134 composition: medicine (of more than one ingredient)  
 135 warrant: guarantee

BEATRICE (*Aside*) I'm put now to my cunning.  
 Th'effects I know—  
 If I can now but feign 'em handsomely. *Drinks*  
 ALSEMERO It has that secret virtue it ne'er missed, sir,  
 Upon a virgin.  
 JASPERINO Treble-qualified? **140**  
*BEATRICE gapes, then sneezes*  
 ALSEMERO By all that's virtuous, it takes there,  
 proceeds!  
 JASPERINO This is the strangest trick to know a maid  
 by.  
 BEATRICE Ha, ha, ha!  
 You have given me joy of heart to drink, my lord.  
 ALSEMERO (*To her*) No, thou hast given me such joy of  
 heart  
 That never can be blasted.  
 BEATRICE What's the matter, sir?  
 ALSEMERO (*To* JASPERINO) See, now 'tis settled in a  
 melancholy  
 Keeps both the time and method.— (*To her*) My **148**  
 Joanna,  
 Chaste as the breath of heaven, or morning's womb  
 That brings the day forth, thus my love encloses thee!  
*Embraces her. Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene iii

*Enter* ISABELLA *and* LOLLIO

ISABELLA O heaven! Is this the waxing moon?  
 Does love turn fool, run mad, and all at once?  
 Sirrah, here's a madman, akin to the fool too,  
 A lunatic lover.  
 LOLLIO No, no!—Not he I brought the letter from?  
 ISABELLA Compare his inside with his out, and tell me.  
*Gives him the letter*  
 LOLLIO The out's mad, I'm sure of that; I had a taste  
 on't. (*Reads*) 'To the bright Andromeda, chief

138 handsomely: convincingly  
 139 that secret virtue: i.e. such rare quality  
 140 Treble-qualified: producing three effects (Alsemero has  
 clearly briefed Jasperino on the effects of the potion)  
 141 takes: takes effect  
 146 blasted: destroyed  
 148 time: sequence  
 method: effect  
 1 waxing: Q has 'waiting' but we follow other eds in this  
 emendation. A waxing moon (one growing bigger) was  
 thought to increase lunacy  
 3 madman: i.e. Franciscus, 'related' to the fool Antonio  
 6 inside with his out: a) compare Franciscus and his  
 disguise; b) compare what is written on the outside of the  
 letter with its contents  
 7-8 The out's . . . taste on't: Lollio thinks that Franciscus is  
 mad when he is disguised and recalls his earlier violence

- chambermaid to the Knight of the Sun, at the sign of Scorpio, in the middle region, sent by the bellows-mender of Aeolus. Pay the post.' This is stark madness. 12
- ISABELLA Now mark the inside. (*Takes the letter and reads*) 'Sweet lady, having now cast off this counterfeit cover of a madman, I appear to your best judgement a true and faithful lover of your beauty.'
- LOLLIO He is mad still.
- ISABELLA 'If any fault you find, chide those perfections in you which have made me imperfect: 'tis the same sun that causeth to grow and enforceth to wither, —'
- LOLLIO O rogue! 21
- ISABELLA '—Shapes and transshapes, destroys and builds again. I come in winter to you, dismantled of my proper ornaments: by the sweet splendour of your cheerful smiles I spring and live a lover.'
- LOLLIO Mad rascal still!
- ISABELLA 'Tread him not under foot, that shall appear an honour to your bounties. I remain—mad till I speak with you, from whom I expect my cure, yours all, or one beside himself, Franciscus.' 30
- LOLLIO You are like to have a fine time on't. My master and I may give over our professions; I do not think but you can cure fools and madmen faster than we, with little pains too.
- ISABELLA Very likely.
- LOLLIO One thing I must tell you, mistress. You perceive that I am privy to your skill: if I find you minister once and set up the trade, I put in for my thirds; I shall be mad or fool else.
- ISABELLA The first place is thine, believe it, Lollo, If I do fall— 41
- LOLLIO I fall upon you.
- ISABELLA So.
- LOLLIO Well, I stand to my venture.
- ISABELLA But thy counsel now, how shall I deal with 'em?
- LOLLIO Why, do you mean to deal with 'em?
- ISABELLA Nay, the fair understanding—how to use 'em.
- LOLLIO Abuse 'em! That's the way to mad the fool and make a fool of the madman, and then you use 'em kindly. 52
- ISABELLA 'Tis easy; I'll practise. Do thou observe it. The key of thy wardrobe.
- LOLLIO There; fit yourself for 'em, and I'll fit 'em both for you. *Gives her the key*
- ISABELLA Take thou no further notice than the outside. *Exit*
- LOLLIO Not an inch: I'll put you to the inside.
- Enter ALIBIUS
- ALIBIUS Lollo, art there? Will all be perfect, think'st thou? Tomorrow night, as if to close up the solemnity, 60 Vermandero expects us.
- LOLLIO I mistrust the madmen most. The fools will do well enough; I have taken pains with them.
- ALIBIUS Tush, they cannot miss. The more absurdity, The more commends it, so no rough behaviours Affright the ladies. They are nice things, thou know'st.
- LOLLIO You need not fear, sir; so long as we are there with our commanding pizzles, they'll be as tame as the ladies themselves.
- ALIBIUS I will see them once more rehearse before they go. 70
- LOLLIO I was about it, sir. Look you to the madmen's
- 40-1 The first . . . do fall: she says that Lollo would indeed be the first recipient of her favour but she is interrupted as she qualifies this with 'If I fall'
- 43 So: yes, but it will not happen
- 44 I stand to my venture: I shall keep to my plan (with sexual connotation)
- 47 deal with: a) treat: b) copulate with
- 48 fair understanding: i.e. the decent meaning of 'deal with'
- 50 Abuse: deceive
- 52 kindly: appropriately (according to their natures)
- 53 practise: scheme
- 55 fit: a) dress; b) prepare; c) arouse (sexually)
- 57 Take thou . . . the outside: treat me as a madwoman
- 58 I'll put . . . the inside: I'll make you have sexual intercourse
- 60 solemnity: celebration
- 65 so: provided that
- 66 nice: delicate
- 68 pizzles: whips made from the penises of bulls
- 8-12 'To the . . . stark madness: Andromeda (Isabella) was rescued from the dragon by Perseus (Franciscus). Chambermaids were thought to be lascivious and typical of the readers of such romances as *The Mirror of Knighthood* (nine parts, printed in England 1578-1601), in which the Knight of the Sun is the hero. The zodiacal sign Scorpio was thought to govern the sexual organs ('the middle region') and Aeolus, the bellows-mender, is significant as the ruler of the winds which would create (sexual) activity, 'bellow' being a term for the phallus. 'Pay the post' (courier) is humorously matter-of-fact in the context of this 'stark madness'
- 23-4 dismantled of my proper ornaments: not in my proper clothes
- 27-8 appear an honour: be honourable
- 30 beside himself: distracted by love
- 32-3 I do not think but: I am sure that
- 37 privy to your skill: aware of your profession minister: a) provide medical treatment; b) respond to the letter
- 38 trade: a) our trade (as keepers); b) the trade of prostitute. my thirds: a) a one-third share of the medical business; b) a one-third share of what she offers sexually (along with Alibius and her lover)

morris, and let me alone with the other; there is one or two that I mistrust their fooling. I'll instruct them, and then they shall rehearse the whole measure.

ALIBIUS Do so; I'll see the music prepared. But, Lollo, By the way, how does my wife brook her restraint? Does she not grudge at it?

LOLLIO So, so. She takes some pleasure in the house, she would abroad else. You must allow her a little more length, she's kept too short. **80**

ALIBIUS She shall along to Vermandero's with us: That will serve her for a month's liberty.

LOLLIO What's that on your face, sir?

ALIBIUS Where, Lollo? I see nothing.

LOLLIO Cry you mercy, sir, 'tis your nose: it showed like the trunk of a young elephant.

ALIBIUS Away, rascal! I'll prepare the music, Lollo. *Exit ALIBIUS*

LOLLIO Do, sir, and I'll dance the whilst.—Tony, where art thou, Tony?

*Enter ANTONIO*

ANTONIO Here, cousin. Where art thou? **90**

LOLLIO Come, Tony, the footmanship I taught you.

ANTONIO I had rather ride, cousin.

LOLLIO Ay, a whip take you! But I'll keep you out. Vault in—look you, Tony: fa, la, la, la, la. *Dances*

ANTONIO Fa, la, la, la, la. *Dances*

LOLLIO There, an honour. *Bows*

ANTONIO Is this an honour, coz? *Bows*

LOLLIO Yes, and it please your worship.

ANTONIO Does honour bend in the hams, coz?

LOLLIO Marry does it, as low as worship, squireship, nay, yeomanry itself sometimes, from whence it first stiffened. There, rise, a caper. **102**

72 morris: Morris dance  
 72-3 one or two: i.e. Franciscus (and Antonio)  
 74 measure: dance  
 76 brook: tolerate  
 77 grudge: complain  
 78 She takes . . . the house: i.e. Isabella can find sexual pleasure here  
 79-80 You must . . . too short: a) she must be allowed more latitude and not be confined: b) she requires a longer penis  
 85 Cry you mercy: I beg your pardon  
 85-6 'tis your . . . young elephant: a) analogous to the horns of a cuckold; b) enlarged because Lollo leads him by it; c) play on size of penis  
 92 ride: copulate  
 94 Vault in: jump into the dance (with sexual connotation in the sense of 'riding' a horse)  
 96 honour: bow  
 98 and: if  
 99 hams: hips  
 100 Marry: by Mary  
 102 stiffened: became formal; became an erection  
 caper: leap (in dancing)

ANTONIO Caper after an honour, coz?

LOLLIO Very proper: for honour is but a caper—rises as fast and high, has a knee or two, and falls to th' ground again. You can remember your figure, Tony? *Exit*

ANTONIO Yes, cousin; when I see thy figure I can remember mine.

*Enter ISABELLA like a madwoman*

ISABELLA Hey, how he treads the air! Shough, shough, t'other way—he burns his wings else! **110**

Here's wax enough below, Icarus—more Than will be cancelled these eighteen moons. *ANTONIO falls*

He's down, he's down! What a terrible fall he had! Stand up, thou son of Cretan Daedalus, And let us tread the lower labyrinth; I'll bring thee to the clue. *Seizes him*

ANTONIO Prithee, coz, let me alone.

ISABELLA Art thou not drowned? About thy head I saw a heap of clouds Wrapped like a Turkish turban; on thy back **120** A crookt chameleon-coloured rainbow hung Like a tiara down unto thy hams. Let me suck out those billows in thy belly: *Kneels and listens*

Hark how they roar and rumble in the straits! Bless thee from the pirates.

ANTONIO Pox upon you, let me alone!

ISABELLA Why shouldst thou mount so high as Mercury, Unless thou hadst reversion of his place?

104-6 rises as . . . ground again: 'quick ascent presages quick descent' (Kinney)  
 107 figure: dance steps  
 110 Shough: 'shoo' (an exclamation to drive him away (used for birds)  
 111 Icarus: in classical mythology the son of the Cretan Daedalus, who made wings of wax in order to fly but fell when the wings were melted by the sun  
 112 cancelled: refers to the process of sealing documents with wax  
 116 the clue: the thread which Ariadne gave to Theseus to unwind as he entered the labyrinth (the madhouse) to kill the Minotaur (Alibius) so that he could return. Here Isabella supposes that Icarus had ended up in the labyrinth, thus conflating two myths  
 121 chameleon-coloured: of ever-changing colour  
 122 tiara: head-dress  
 123 billows: sea water (into which Icarus fell)  
 124 the straits: the sea between Crete and Greece where Icarus fell  
 125 Bless thee: may God preserve thee  
 127 Mercury: the winged messenger of the gods  
 128 reversion: the right of succession

- Stay in the moon with me, Endymion,  
And we will rule these wild rebellious waves  
That would have drowned my love. 130
- ANTONIO I'll kick thee if again thou touch me,  
Thou wild unshapen antic; I am no fool,  
You bedlam!
- ISABELLA But you are, as sure as I am, mad.  
Have I put on this habit of a frantic,  
With love as full of fury, to beguile  
The nimble eye of watchful jealousy,  
And am I thus rewarded? *Reveals herself*
- ANTONIO Ha, dearest beauty!
- ISABELLA No, I have no beauty now,  
Nor never had, but what was in my garments. 140  
You a quick-sighted lover? Come not near me!  
Keep your caparisons, y'are aptly clad;  
I came a feigner, to return stark mad. *Exit*
- Enter LOLLIO*
- ANTONIO Stay, or I shall change condition,  
And become as you are.
- LOLLIO Why, Tony, whither now? Why, fool?
- ANTONIO Whose fool, usher of idiots? You coxcomb!  
I have fooled too much.
- LOLLIO You were best be mad another while then.
- ANTONIO So I am, stark mad: I have cause enough, 150  
And I could throw the full effects on thee,  
And beat thee like a fury!
- LOLLIO Do not, do not. I shall not forbear the  
gentleman under the fool if you do—alas, I saw  
through your fox-skin before now! Come, I can give  
you comfort. My mistress loves you, and there is as  
arrant a madman i'th'house as you are a fool, your  
rival, whom she loves not. If after the masque we can  
rid her of him, you earn her love, she says, and the  
fool shall ride her. 160
- ANTONIO May I believe thee?
- LOLLIO Yes, or you may choose whether you will or no.
- ANTONIO She's eased of him; I have a good quarrel  
on't.
- LOLLIO Well, keep your old station yet, and be quiet.
- ANTONIO Tell her I will deserve her love. *Exit*
- LOLLIO And you are like to have your desire.
- Enter FRANCISCUS*
- FRANCISCUS (*Sings*) 'Down, down, down a-down a-  
down'; and then with a horse-trick 167  
To kick Latona's forehead, and break her bowstring.
- LOLLIO (*Aside*) This is r'other counterfeit; I'll put him  
out of his humour. (*Takes out letter and reads*) 'Sweet  
lady, having now cast off this counterfeit cover of a  
madman, I appear to your best judgement a true and  
faithful lover of your beauty.' This is pretty well for a  
madman.
- FRANCISCUS Ha! What's that?
- LOLLIO 'Chide those perfections in you which have  
made me imperfect.'
- FRANCISCUS I am discovered to the fool.
- LOLLIO I hope to discover the fool in you, ere I have  
done with you. 'Yours all, or one beside himself,  
Franciscus.' This madman will mend sure. 181
- FRANCISCUS What do you read, sirrah?
- LOLLIO Your destiny, sir. You'll be hanged for this  
trick, and another that I know.
- FRANCISCUS Art thou of counsel with thy mistress?
- LOLLIO Next her apron-strings.
- FRANCISCUS Give me thy hand.
- LOLLIO Stay, let me put yours in my pocket first (*Puts  
away the letter*). Your hand is true is it not? It will not  
pick? I partly fear it, because I think it does lie. 190
- FRANCISCUS Not in a syllable.
- LOLLIO So; if you love my mistress so well as you have  
handled the matter here, you are like to be cured of  
your madness.
- FRANCISCUS And none but she can cure it.
- LOLLIO Well, I'll give you over then, and she shall cast  
your water next.
- FRANCISCUS Take for thy pains past. *Gives him money*
- LOLLIO I shall deserve more, sir, I hope. My mistress

129 Endymion: a youth beloved by Luna (the moon) who controlled the seas  
133 unshapen antic: deformed grotesque figure  
134 bedlam: lunatic  
135 frantic: lunatic  
142 caparisons: grotesque clothes  
143 feigner: pretender  
147 usher: a) doorkeeper; b) assistant school master  
153-4 forbear the . . . the fool: tolerate this behaviour, even if it comes from a disguised gentleman  
155 fox-skin: cunning disguise  
157 arrant: wandering  
159 rid her of: set her free from  
160 ride her: copulate with

164 station: position (as a fool)  
167 horse-trick: a) horse-play; b) copulation  
168 Latona's: in classical mythology Latona was the mother of Diana (or Artemis) who hunted with a bow and arrow. Here Lollo means Diana herself (represented by Isabella)  
178 discovered to: found out by  
179 discover: expose  
183-4 this trick: fraud  
184 another: i.e. the horse-trick, l. 167  
185 of counsel in: confidence  
188 yours: referring to a) hand; b) handwriting  
189 true: honest  
190 pick: i.e. pick his pocket  
197 cast your water: make a diagnosis through examining urine

loves you, but must have some proof of your love to her. 201  
 FRANCISCUS There I meet my wishes.  
 LOLLIO That will not serve: you must meet her enemy and yours.  
 FRANCISCUS He's dead already!  
 LOLLIO Will you tell me that, and I parted but now with him?  
 FRANCISCUS Show me the man.  
 LOLLIO Ay, that's a right course now: see him before you kill him in any case. And yet it needs not go so far neither. 'Tis but a fool that haunts the house and my mistress in the shape of an idiot. Bang but his fool's coat well-favouredly, and 'tis well. 213  
 FRANCISCUS Soundly, soundly!  
 LOLLIO Only reserve him till the masque be past, and if you find him not now in the dance yourself, I'll show you. In, in! My master! *Dances*  
 FRANCISCUS He handles him like a feather. Hey! *Exit dancing*

*Enter ALIBIUS*

ALIBIUS Well said. In a readiness, Lolloio?  
 LOLLIO Yes, sir. 220  
 ALIBIUS Away then, and guide them in, Lolloio;  
 Entreat your mistress to see this sight. *Exit LOLLIO*  
 Hark, is there not one incurable fool  
 That might be begged? I have friends.  
 LOLLIO (*Within*) I have him for you: one that shall deserve it too.  
 ALIBIUS Good boy, Lolloio.

*Enter ISABELLA, then LOLLIO with MADMEN and FOOLS. The MADMEN and FOOLS dance*

ALIBIUS 'Tis perfect. Well, fit but once these strains,  
 We shall have coin and credit for our pains. *Exeunt*

205 He's dead: He's as good as dead  
 213 well-favouredly: soundly  
 215 reserve: spare  
 217 In, in! . . . My master: Lolloio sees Alibius as he guides Franciscus to another part of the stage  
 218 him: himself  
 219 said: done  
 223-4 there not . . . be begged: to 'beg a fool' was to apply to the Court of Wards and Liveries for the supervision of a person who was proved to be a congenital 'idiot'. A successful applicant would have powers of attorney over that person's wealth and property  
 225 him: Antonio  
 228 fit but . . . these strains: apply efforts that will match the music

## Act V, scene i

*Enter BEATRICE. A clock strikes one*

BEATRICE One struck, and yet she lies by't!—O my fears!  
 This strumpet serves her own ends, 'tis apparent now,  
 Devours the pleasure with a greedy appetite,  
 And never minds my honour or my peace,  
 Makes havoc of my right. But she pays dearly for't:  
 No trusting of her life with such a secret,  
 That cannot rule her blood to keep her promise.  
 Beside, I have some suspicion of her faith to me,  
 Because I was suspected of my lord, 9  
 And it must come from her.—Hark, by my horrors,  
 Another clock strikes two. *Strikes two*

*Enter DE FLORES*

DE FLORES Pist, where are you?  
 BEATRICE De Flores!  
 DE FLORES Ay. Is she not come from him yet?  
 BEATRICE As I am a living soul, not.  
 DE FLORES Sure the devil  
 Hath sowed his itch within her. Who would trust  
 A waiting-woman?  
 BEATRICE I must trust somebody.  
 DE FLORES Push, they are termagants,  
 Especially when they fall upon their masters  
 And have their ladies' first-fruits; th'are mad whelps,  
 You cannot stave 'em off from game royal. Then,  
 You are so harsh and hardy, ask no counsel; 20  
 And I could have helped you to an apothecary's  
 daughter  
 Would have fall'n off before eleven, and thanked you  
 too.  
 BEATRICE O me, not yet? This whore forgets herself.  
 DE FLORES The rascal fares so well. Look, y'are  
 undone:  
 The day-star, by this hand! See Phosphorus plain  
 yonder.

1 and yet she lies by't: and still she (Diaphanta) is having intercourse  
 2 ends: with possible pun on pudendum  
 4 peace: peace of mind  
 5 right: rights  
 6 secret: i.e. the bed-trick  
 7 blood: sexual passion  
 9 of: by  
 14 itch: a) inclination to evil; b) sexual impulse  
 16 termagants: fierce, violent women  
 17 fall upon: have sex with  
 19 stave 'em . . . game royal: 'divert them from hunting game which are a royal preserve' (Frost)  
 20 harsh and hardy: rough and rash  
 25 Phosphorus: Venus, the morning star

BEATRICE Advise me now to fall upon some ruin;  
 There is no counsel safe else.

DE FLORES Peace! I ha't now,  
 For we must force a rising; there's no remedy.

BEATRICE How? Take heed of that.

DE FLORES Tush, be you quiet, or else give over all. 30

BEATRICE Prithee, I ha' done then.

DE FLORES This is my reach: I'll set  
 Some part a-fire of Diaphanta's chamber.

BEATRICE How? Fire, sir? That may endanger the  
 whole house.

DE FLORES You talk of danger when your fame's on  
 fire?

BEATRICE That's true; do what thou wilt now.

DE FLORES Push, I aim  
 At a most rich success, strikes all dead sure:  
 The chimney being a-fire, and some light parcels  
 Of the least danger in her chamber only,  
 If Diaphanta should be met by chance then  
 Far from her lodging (which is now suspicious), 40  
 It would be thought her fears and affrights then  
 Drove her to seek for succour; if not seen  
 Or met at all, as that's the likeliest,  
 For her own shame she'll hasten towards her lodging.  
 I will be ready with a piece high-charged,  
 As 'twere to cleanse the chimney; there 'tis proper,  
 But she shall be the mark.

BEATRICE I'm forced to love thee now,  
 'Cause thou provid'st so carefully for my honour.

DE FLORES 'Slid, it concerns the safety of us both,  
 Our pleasure and continuance.

BEATRICE One word now, 50  
 Prithee. How for the servants?

DE FLORES I'll despatch them  
 Some one way, some another in the hurry,

- 
- 26 fall upon some ruin: devise some destruction (of Diaphanta)  
 27 counsel safe else: safe alternative plan  
 28 force a rising: make everyone (including Diaphanta and Alsemero) rise from their beds  
 30 give over all: surrender all hope  
 31 reach: plan  
 34 fame: reputation  
 36 success: outcome  
 strikes all dead sure: solves all the problems  
 37 parcel: items  
 40 lodging: bedroom  
 45 piece high-charged: heavily load gun  
 46 proper: Q has 'proper now' but the 'now' seems superfluous. De Flores means that it would be appropriate in the circumstances (now) to have a gun nearby to put out a chimney fire  
 47 mark: target  
 49 'Slid: by God's eyelid  
 50 Our pleasure and continuance: sexual pleasure and its continuance, and their continued existence

For buckets, hooks, ladders. Fear not you;  
 The deed shall find its time.—And I've thought since  
 Upon a safe conveyance for the body too.  
 How this fire purifies wit! Watch you your minute.

BEATRICE Fear keeps my soul upon't; I cannot stray  
 from't.

*Enter ALONZO's ghost*

DE FLORES Ha! What art thou, that tak'st away the light  
 'Twi'x that star and me? I dread thee not;  
 'Twas but a mist of conscience.—All's clear again. 60

*Exit*

BEATRICE Who's that, De Flores? Bless me! It slides  
 by! *Exit ghost*  
 Some ill thing haunts the house; 't has left behind it  
 A shivering sweat upon me. I'm afraid now.  
 This night hath been so tedious! O, this strumpet!  
 Had she a thousand lives, he should not leave her  
 Till he had destroyed the last. List! O my terrors!  
*Struck three o'clock*

Three struck, by Saint Sebastian's!

VOICES (*within*) Fire, fire, fire!

BEATRICE Already! How rare is that man's speed!  
 How heartily he serves me! His face loathes one, 70  
 But look upon his care, who would not love him?  
 The east is not more beauteous than his service.

VOICES (*within*) Fire, fire, fire!

*Enter DE FLORES; SERVANTS pass over, ring a bell*

DE FLORES Away, despatch! Hooks, buckets, ladders!  
 That's well said!—  
 The fire-bell rings, the chimney works; my charge,  
 The piece is ready. *Exit*

BEATRICE Here's a man worth loving!—

*Enter DIAPHANTA*

O, y'are a jewel!

DIAPHANTA Pardon frailty, madam;  
 In troth I was so well I ev'n forgot myself.

BEATRICE Y'have made trim work.

DIAPHANTA What?

BEATRICE Hie quickly to your chamber;

- 
- 54 The deed . . . its time: the killing of Diaphanta will be timed appropriately  
 55 conveyance: removal  
 56 minute: your timing (she is to return to Alsemero's bed)  
 64 tedious: painful and long  
 70 loathes one: is loathsome to one  
 72 The east: sunrise  
 75-6 the chimney . . . is ready: Q has 'the chimney works, my charge;/The piece is ready', but since the gun has yet to be fired, 'the chimney works' presumably means 'the chimney is on fire' or 'the chimney trick is working'  
 77 jewel: a) a gem; b) chastity itself (ironically)  
 79 trim work: a good job of it (sarcastically)



Your reward follows you.  
 DIAPHANTA I never made  
 So sweet a bargain.  
*Enter* ALSEMERO  
 ALSEMERO O my dear Joanna!  
 Alas, art thou risen too? I was coming,  
 My absolute treasure.  
 BEATRICE When I missed you  
 I could not choose but follow.  
 ALSEMERO Th'art all sweetness!  
 The fire is not so dangerous.  
 BEATRICE Think you so, sir?  
 ALSEMERO I prithee, tremble not; believe me, 'tis not.  
*Enter* VERMANDERO, JASPERINO  
 VERMANDERO O, bless my house and me!  
 ALSEMERO My lord your father.  
*Enter* DE FLORES *with a piece*  
 VERMANDERO Knaves, whither goes that piece?  
 DE FLORES To scour the chimney. *Exit*  
 VERMANDERO O, well said, well said!  
 That fellow's good on all occasions. 90  
 BEATRICE A wondrous necessary man, my lord.  
 VERMANDERO He hath a ready wit; he's worth 'em all,  
 sir.  
 Dog at a house on fire—I ha' seen him singed ere  
 now. *The piece goes off*  
 Ha, there he goes.  
 BEATRICE (*Aside*) 'Tis done.  
 ALSEMERO Come, sweet, to bed now;  
 Alas, thou wilt get cold.  
 BEATRICE Alas, the fear keeps that out!  
 My heart will find no quiet till I hear  
 How Diaphanta, my poor woman, fares;  
 It is her chamber, sir, her lodging chamber.  
 VERMANDERO How should the fire come there?  
 BEATRICE As good a soul as ever lady countenanced,  
 But in her chamber negligent and heavy. 101  
 She 'scaped a ruin twice.  
 VERMANDERO Twice?  
 BEATRICE Strangely, twice, sir.  
 VERMANDERO Those sleepy sluts are dangerous in a  
 house,  
 And they be ne'er so good.

*Enter* DE FLORES

80 your reward: a) payment; b) your death  
 93 Dog at: skilled in  
 100 countenanced: favoured, employed  
 101 heavy: sluggish  
 102 ruin: Q has 'mine' which makes sense (as a 'blast') but we  
 follow Craik's emendation  
 104 And they . . . so good: no matter how good as servants

DE FLORES O poor virginity!  
 Thou hast paid dearly for't.  
 VERMANDERO Bless us! What's that?  
 DE FLORES A thing you all knew once—Diaphanta's  
 burnt.  
 BEATRICE My woman! O my woman!  
 DE FLORES Now the flames  
 Are greedy of her: burnt, burnt, burnt to death, sir.  
 BEATRICE O my presaging soul!  
 ALSEMERO Not a tear more!  
 I charge you by the last embrace I gave you 110  
 In bed, before this raised us.  
 BEATRICE Now you tie me:  
 Were it my sister, now she gets no more.

*Enter* SERVANT

VERMANDERO How now?  
 SERVANT All danger's past; you may now take  
 Your rests, my lords. The fire is thoroughly quenched.  
 Ah, poor gentlewoman, how soon was she stifled!  
 BEATRICE De Flores, what is left of her inter,  
 And we as mourners all will follow her.  
 I will entreat that honour to my servant  
 Ev'n of my lord himself.  
 ALSEMERO Command it, sweetness. 119  
 BEATRICE Which of you spied the fire first?  
 DE FLORES 'Twas I, madam.  
 BEATRICE And took such pains in't too? A double  
 goodness!  
 'Twere well he were rewarded.  
 VERMANDERO He shall be.  
 De Flores, call upon me.  
 ALSEMERO And upon me, sir.  
*Exeunt all except* DE FLORES  
 DE FLORES Rewarded? Precious! Here's a trick beyond  
 me!  
 I see in all bouts, both of sport and wit,  
 Always a woman strives for the last hit.

*Exit*

## Act V, scene ii

*Enter* TOMAZO

TOMAZO I cannot taste the benefits of life  
 With the same relish I was wont to do.  
 Man I grow weary of, and hold his fellowship  
 A treacherous bloody friendship; and because

104 O poor virginity!: i.e. perhaps if Diaphanta had had a  
 husband she might have survived. De Flores may enter  
 carrying Diaphanta's body  
 111 tie: constrain  
 114 thoroughly: thoroughly  
 124 Precious: by God's precious body  
 125 sport: a) games; b) sexual play

I am ignorant in whom my wrath should settle,  
I must think all men villains, and the next  
I meet, who'er he be, the murderer  
Of my most worthy brother.—Ha! What's he?

*Enter DE FLORES, passes over the stage*

O, the fellow that some call honest De Flores.  
But methinks honesty was hard bested 10  
To come there for a lodging—as if a queen  
Should make her palace of a pest-house.  
I find a contrariety in nature  
Betwixt that face and me; the least occasion  
Would give me game upon him. Yet he's so foul,  
One would scarce touch him with a sword he loved  
And made account of; so most deadly venomous,  
He would go near to poison any weapon  
That should draw blood on him. One must resolve  
Never to use that sword again in fight, 20  
In way of honest manhood, that strikes him.  
Some river must devour it; 'twere not fit  
That any man should find it.—What, again?

*Enter DE FLORES*

He walks a' purpose by, sure, to choke me up,  
To infect my blood.

DE FLORES My worthy noble lord!

TOMAZO Dost offer to come near and breathe upon  
me?

DE FLORES A blow! *Strikes him*  
*Draws his sword*

TOMAZO Yea, are you so prepared?

I'll rather like a soldier die by th' sword  
Than like a politician by thy poison. *Draws*

DE FLORES Hold, my lord, as you are honourable. 30

TOMAZO All slaves that kill by poison are still cowards.

DE FLORES (*Aside*) I cannot strike: I see his brother's  
wounds

Fresh bleeding in his eye, as in a crystal.

(*To TOMAZO*) I will not question this: I know y'are  
noble *Sheathes his sword*

I take my injury with thanks given, sir,

Like a wise lawyer, and as a favour

Will wear it for the worthy hand that gave it.

(*Aside*) Why this from him, that yesterday appeared  
So strangely loving to me?

O, but instinct is of a subtler strain! 40

10 hard bested: hard pressed

12 pest-house: hospital for plague victims

15 game upon: a reason to fight

24 choke me up: suffocate by his mere proximity

29 politician: schemer (a word derived from  
Machiavelli)

31 still: always

33 crystal: crystal ball

36–7 Like a . . . gave it: lawyers were thought to tolerate  
humiliation so as to press charges later

Guilt must not walk so near his lodge again—

He came near me now. *Exit*

TOMAZO All league with mankind I renounce for ever

Till I find this murderer. Not so much

As common courtesy but I'll lock up,

For in the state of ignorance I live in

A brother may salute his brother's murderer,

And wish good speed to th'villain in a greeting.

*Enter VERMANDERO, ALIBIUS and ISABELLA*

VERMANDERO Noble Piracquo!

TOMAZO Pray keep on your way, sir;

I've nothing to say to you.

VERMANDERO Comforts bless you, sir. 50

TOMAZO I have forsworn compliment; in troth I have,  
sir.

As you are merely man, I have not left

A good wish for you, nor any here.

VERMANDERO Unless you be so far in love with grief

You will not part from't upon any terms,

We bring that news will make a welcome for us.

TOMAZO What news can that be?

VERMANDERO Throw no scornful smile

Upon the zeal I bring you; 'tis worth more, sir.

Two of the chiefest men I kept about me

I hide not from the law, or your just vengeance. 60

TOMAZO Ha!

VERMANDERO To give your peace more ample  
satisfaction,

Thank these discoverers.

TOMAZO If you bring that calm,

Name but the manner I shall ask forgiveness in

For that contemptuous smile upon you:

I'll perfect it with reverence that belongs

Unto a sacred altar. *Kneels*

VERMANDERO Good sir, rise.

Why, now you overdo as much a' this hand,

As you fell short a't'other.—Speak, Alibius.

ALIBIUS 'Twas my wife's fortune—as she is most lucky

At a discovery—to find out lately 71

Within our hospital of fools and madmen

42 came near me: seemed (instinctively) to sense something  
of my guilt

43 league: alliance, connection

44–5 Not so . . . lock up: I'll display no more than something  
less than common courtesy' (Daalder)

48 speed: success

51 compliment: formal courtesy

58 zeal: good will

59 Two of the chiefest men: i.e. Franciscus and Antonio

60 or your just vengeance: private revenge, seen by some as a  
proper substitute for legal process (which Vermandero  
also offers)

63 these discoverers: Alibius and Isabella

Two counterfeiters slipped into these disguises;  
 Their names, Franciscus and Antonio.  
 VERMANDERO Both mine, sir, and I ask no favour for  
 'em.  
 ALIBIUS Now that which draws suspicion to their habits:  
 The time of their disguisings agrees justly  
 With the day of the murder.  
 TOMAZO O blest revelation!  
 VERMANDERO Nay more, nay more, sir—I'll not spare  
 mine own  
 In way of justice—they both feigned a journey 80  
 To Briamata, and so wrought out their leaves;  
 My love was so abused in't.  
 TOMAZO Time's too precious  
 To run in waste now. You have brought a peace  
 The riches of five kingdoms could not purchase.  
 Be my most happy conduct. I thirst for 'em:  
 Like subtle lightning will I wind about 'em,  
 And melt their marrow in 'em.

*Exeunt*

### Act V, scene iii

*Enter ALSEMERO and JASPERINO*

JASPERINO Your confidence, I'm sure, is now of proof.  
 The prospect from the garden has showed  
 Enough for deep suspicion.  
 ALSEMERO The black mask  
 That so continually was worn upon't  
 Condemns the face for ugly ere't be seen—  
 Her despite to him, and so seeming bottomless.  
 JASPERINO Touch it home then. 'Tis not a shallow  
 probe

73 these disguises: either the guises of 'fools and madmen'  
 or, as Daalder suggests, Alibius has the actual disguises  
 with him  
 75 mine: 'my men'  
 favour: lenient treatment  
 76 habits: clothes  
 77 justly: exactly  
 81 wrought out their leaves: worked out their requests for  
 leave of absence  
 85 conduct: guide  
 86-7 subtle lightening . . . in 'em: lightning was believed to  
 melt the marrow of the bones without disfiguring the  
 body and was thus an image of sudden and unusual death  
 1 confidence: distrust in Beatrice  
 of proof: confirmed and strong  
 2 prospect from the garden: Jasperino and Alsemero have  
 seen an exchange between Beatrice and De Flores which  
 has supported their suspicion  
 3 black mask: Beatrice's deceitful outward show  
 5 ugly ere't be seen: her face is morally tainted even before  
 it is revealed  
 6 despite to: scorn of  
 7 Touch it home: investigate it to the end

Can search this ulcer soundly: I fear you'll find it  
 Full of corruption.—'Tis fit I leave you.  
 She meets you opportunely from that walk; 10  
 She took the back door at his parting with her.  
*Exit JASPERINO*  
 ALSEMERO Did my fate wait for this unhappy stroke  
 At my first sight of woman?—She's here.

*Enter BEATRICE*

BEATRICE Alsemero!  
 ALSEMERO How do you?  
 BEATRICE How do I?  
 Alas! How do you? You look not well.  
 ALSEMERO You read me well enough. I am not well.  
 BEATRICE Not well, sir? Is't in my power to better you?  
 ALSEMERO Yes.  
 BEATRICE Nay, then y'are cured again.  
 ALSEMERO Pray resolve me one question, lady.  
 BEATRICE If I can.  
 ALSEMERO None can so sure. Are you honest? 20  
 BEATRICE Ha, ha, ha! That's a broad question, my lord.  
 ALSEMERO But that's not a modest answer, my lady.  
 Do you laugh? My doubts are strong upon me.  
 BEATRICE 'Tis innocence that smiles, and no rough  
 brow  
 Can take away the dimple in her cheek.  
 Say I should strain a tear to fill the vault,  
 Which would you give the better faith to?  
 ALSEMERO 'Twere but hypocrisy of a sadder colour,  
 But the same stuff. Neither your smiles not tears  
 Shall move or flatter me from my belief: 30  
 You are a whore.  
 BEATRICE What a horrid sound it hath!  
 It blasts a beauty to deformity;  
 Upon what face soever that breath falls,  
 It strikes it ugly. O, you have ruined  
 What you can ne'er repair again!  
 ALSEMERO I'll all demolish, and seek out truth within  
 you,  
 If there be any left. Let your sweet tongue

12-13 Did my . . . of woman?: Beatrice was Alsemero's first  
 love (see I.i.1-12) and he wonders whether it was his  
 destiny to receive this 'unhappy stroke' of fortune  
 19 resolve: answer  
 20 honest: a) truthful; b) chaste (as in faithful)  
 21 broad: a) unfocused; b) vulgar  
 22 modest: chaste  
 25 her: i.e. innocence (Beatrice personifies innocence and  
 remains truthful)  
 26 strain: force  
 the vault: the arch of the sky  
 27 Which: i.e. a smile or tears  
 28 sadder: more solemn, graver  
 29 the same stuff: cut from the same cloth

- Prevent your heart's rifling; there I'll ransack  
And tear out my suspicion.
- BEATRICE You may, sir,  
'Tis an easy passage. Yet, if you please, 40  
Show me the ground whereon you lost your love.  
My spotless virtue may but tread on that  
Before I perish.
- ALSEMERO Unanswerable!  
A ground you cannot stand on: you fall down  
Beneath all grace and goodness when you set  
Your ticklish heel on it. There was a visor  
O'er that cunning face, and that became you;  
Now impudence in triumph rides upon't.  
How comes this tender reconciliation else  
'Twixt you and your despite, your rancorous loathing,  
De Flores? He that your eye was sore at sight of, 51  
He's now become your arms' supporter, your  
Lips' saint!
- BEATRICE Is there the cause?  
ALSEMERO Worse; your lust's devil,  
Your adultery!
- BEATRICE Would any but yourself say that,  
'Twould turn him to a villain.
- ALSEMERO It was witnessed  
By the counsel of your bosom, Diaphanta.
- BEATRICE Is your witness dead then?
- ALSEMERO 'Tis to be feared  
It was the wages of her knowledge. Poor soul,  
She lived not long after the discovery.
- BEATRICE Then hear a story of not much less horror 60  
Than this your false suspicion is beguiled with.  
To your bed's scandal, I stand up innocence,  
Which even the guilt of one black other deed
- Will stand for proof of. Your love has made me  
A cruel murd'ress.
- ALSEMERO Ha!  
BEATRICE A bloody one;  
I have kissed poison for it, stroked a serpent:  
That thing of hate—worthy in my esteem  
Of no better employment, and him most worthy  
To be so employed—I caused to murder  
That innocent Piracquo, having no 70  
Better means than that worst, to assure  
Yourself to me.
- ALSEMERO O, the place itself e'er since  
Has crying been for vengeance: the temple  
Where blood and beauty first unlawfully  
Fired their devotion, and quenched the right one;  
'Twas in my fears at first, 'twill have it now:  
O, thou art all deformed!
- BEATRICE Forget not, sir,  
If for your sake was done. Shall greater dangers  
Make the less welcome?
- ALSEMERO O, thou shouldst have gone  
A thousand leagues about to have avoided 80  
This dangerous bridge of blood! Here we are lost.
- BEATRICE Remember I am true unto your bed.
- ALSEMERO The bed itself's a charnel, the sheets shrouds  
For murdered carcasses. It must ask pause  
What I must do in this. Meantime you shall  
Be my prisoner only. Enter my closet;  
*Exit BEATRICE into closet*
- I'll be your keeper yet.—O, in what part  
Of this sad story shall I first begin?—Ha!
- Enter DE FLORES*
- This same fellow has put me in.—De Flores?  
DE FLORES Noble Alsemero!  
ALSEMERO I can tell you 90  
News, sir. My wife has her commended to you.
- DE FLORES That's news indeed, my lord; I think she  
would
- 64 Your love: my love for you  
66 stroked: possibly with the sense 'copulated with'  
72 the place: the temple  
74 blood: sexual desire  
75 right one: i.e. religious devotion  
76 'twill have it now: unclear, but possibly: a) the temple will  
have vengeance; b) Alsemero will now take vengeance  
78-9 Shall greater . . . less welcome?: 'shall the greater  
dangers I have dared for you make my welcome the less?'  
(Black)  
80 about: out of your way  
83 charnel: charnel-house (repository for the dead)  
84 pause: i.e. for consideration of  
87 yet: for the time being  
89 put me in: put me in mind (i.e. shown me where to  
begin)  
91 her commended to you: asked to be remembered

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38 your heart's rifling: the tearing open of her heart to see into it  
41 ground: basis  
42 may but tread on that: can only crush it  
43 Unanswerable: the basis (ground) is so strong that it is beyond any denial or argument  
46 ticklish: a) unsteady; b) easily aroused (sexually)  
visor: the mask mentioned at the beginning of the scene  
47 became: a) flattered; b) was appropriately false  
48 impudence: shamelessness  
50 despite: object of scorn  
52 arms' supporter: some eds emend to 'arm's'; we follow Q and note the suggestion by Williams that this may refer to the men or beasts that support a shield of arms in heraldry; the elevated, martial tone of the passage would justify such a reading  
53 Lips' saint: a) lover (colloquial); b) object of prayer and spiritual appeal  
there: that  
54 adultery: partner in adultery  
56 counsel of your bosom: confidante  
62 To: in response to the accusation of

Commend me to the gallows if she could,  
 She ever loved me so well. I thank her.  
 ALSEMERO What's this blood upon your band, De  
 Flores?  
 DE FLORES Blood? No, sure; 'twas washed since.  
 ALSEMERO Since when, man?  
 DE FLORES Since t'other day I got a knock  
 In a sword-and-dagger school; I think 'tis out.  
 ALSEMERO Yes, 'tis almost out, but 'tis perceived  
 though.—  
 I had forgot my message. This it is: 100  
 What price goes murder?  
 DE FLORES How, sir?  
 ALSEMERO I ask you, sir.  
 My wife's behindhand with you, she tells me,  
 For a brave bloody blow you gave for her sake  
 Upon Piracquo.  
 DE FLORES Upon? 'Twas quite through him, sure.  
 Has she confessed it?  
 ALSEMERO As sure as death to both of you,  
 And much more than that.  
 DE FLORES It could not be much more:  
 'Twas but one thing, and that—she's a whore.  
 ALSEMERO It could not choose but follow. O cunning  
 devils!  
 How should blind men know you from fair-faced  
 saints? 109  
 BEATRICE (*within*) He lies, the villain does belie me!  
 DE FLORES Let me go to her, sir.  
 ALSEMERO Nay, you shall to her.—  
 Peace, crying crocodile, your sounds are heard!  
 Take your prey to you.—Get you in to her, sir.  
*Exit DE FLORES into closet*  
 I'll be your pander now: rehearse again  
 Your scene of lust, that you may be perfect  
 When you shall come to act it to the black audience  
 Where howls and gnashings shall be music to you.  
 Clip your adult'ress freely—'tis the pilot  
 Will guide you to the Mare Mortuum,  
 Where you shall sink to fathoms bottomless. 120

*Enter VERMANDERO, ALIBIUS, ISABELLA, TOMAZO,  
 FRANCISCUS, and ANTONIO*

VERMANDERO O Alsemero, I have a wonder for you.

95 band: cuff  
 102 behindhand with: indebted to  
 103 brave: a) courageous; b) splendid  
 112 crying crocodile: crocodiles were believed to shed false  
 tears over their prey  
 113 in to: Q has 'into' (with possible sexual connotation)  
 114 pander: pimp  
 116 black audience: devils of hell  
 118 clip: embrace  
 pilot: i.e. Beatrice, who will guide De Flores to hell  
 119 Mare Mortuum: the Dead Sea, here pictured as hell

ALSEMERO No sir, 'tis I, I have a wonder for you.  
 VERMANDERO I have suspicion near as proof itself  
 For Piracquo's murder.  
 ALSEMERO Sir, I have proof  
 Beyond suspicion for Piracquo's murder.  
 VERMANDERO Beseech you, hear me. These two have  
 been disguised  
 E'er since the deed was done.  
 ALSEMERO I have two other  
 That were more close disguised than your two could  
 be,  
 E'er since the deed was done.  
 VERMANDERO You'll hear me—these mine own  
 servants— 130  
 ALSEMERO Hear me—those nearer than your servants,  
 That shall acquit them, and prove them guiltless.  
 FRANCISCUS That may be done with easy truth, sir.  
 TOMAZO How is my cause bandied through your  
 delays!  
 'Tis urgent in my blood, and calls for haste:  
 Give me a brother alive or dead—  
 Alive, a wife with him; if dead, for both  
 A recompense, for murder and adultery.  
 BEATRICE (*within*) O, O, O!  
 ALSEMERO Hark, 'tis coming to you.  
 DE FLORES (*within*) Nay, I'll along for company. O, O!  
 BEATRICE (*within*)  
 VERMANDERO What horrid sounds are these? 141  
 ALSEMERO Come forth, you twins of mischief!  
*Enter DE FLORES bringing in BEATRICE wounded*  
 DE FLORES Here we are. If you have any more  
 To say to us, speak quickly; I shall not  
 Give you the hearing else. I am so stout yet,  
 And so, I think, that broken rib of mankind.  
 VERMANDERO An host of enemies ent'red my citadel  
 Could not amaze like this. Joanna! Beatrice! Joanna!  
 BEATRICE O come not near me, sir; I shall defile you.  
 I am that of your blood was taken from you 150

126 these two: i.e. Antonio and Franciscus  
 128 close: covertly  
 131 nearer: a) in rank and kin; b) to the truth of the crime  
 134 bandied: tossed about (thus neglected)  
 138 adultery: Tomazo regards Beatrice's marriage to  
 Alsemero as adulterous as she was engaged to Alonzo  
 139 'tis: i.e. revenge  
 140 I'll along for company: De Flores 'accompanies' Beatrice  
 by wounding himself  
 145 stout: strong enough still (to talk, despite the wounds)  
 146 that broken rib of mankind: Beatrice is described as though  
 she is Eve, created from Adam's rib (see Genesis, 2.21-3)  
 148 amaze: perplex, confound (make a labyrinth of  
 Vermandero's citadel)  
 149 defile: infect  
 150-1 I am . . . better health: Beatrice refers to phlebotomy  
 (the removal of bad blood in order to cure illness)

- For your better health. Look no more upon't,  
But cast it to the ground regardlessly;  
Let the common sewer take it from distinction.  
Beneath the stars, upon yon meteor
- pointing to DE FLORES*
- Ever hung my fate, 'mongst things corruptible;  
I ne'er could pluck it from him. My loathing  
Was prophet to the rest, but ne'er believed;  
Mine honour fell with him, and now my life.—  
Alsemero, I am a stranger to your bed:  
Your bed was coz'ned on the nuptial night,  
For which your false bride died. **160**
- ALSEMERO *Diaphanta!*  
DE FLORES Yes; and the while I coupled with your  
mate  
At barley-break. Now we are left in hell.  
VERMANDERO We are all there; it circumscribes us  
here.  
DE FLORES I loved this woman in spite of her heart;  
Her love I earned out of Piracquo's murder.  
TOMAZO Ha! My brother's murderer!  
DE FLORES Yes, and her honour's prize  
Was my reward, I thank life for nothing  
But that pleasure; it was so sweet to me  
That I have drunk up all, left none behind **170**  
For any man to pledge me.  
VERMANDERO *Horrid villain!*  
Keep life in him for further tortures.  
DE FLORES *No:—*  
I can prevent you, here's my penknife still.  
It is but one thread more, (*Stabs himself*)—and now  
'tis cut.  
Make haste, Joanna, by that token to thee  
Canst not forget, so lately put in mind;  
I would not go to leave thee far behind. *Dies*  
BEATRICE Forgive me, Alsemero, all forgive!  
'Tis time to die, when 'tis a shame to live. *Dies*  
VERMANDERO O, my name is ent'red now in that  
record **180**
- Where till this fatal hour 'twas never read.  
ALSEMERO Let it be blotted out; let your heart lose it,  
And it can never look you in the face,  
Nor tell a tale behind the back of life  
To your dishonour. Justice hath so right  
The guilty hit, that innocence is quit  
By proclamation, and may joy again.  
Sir, you are sensible of what truth hath done;  
'Tis the best comfort that your grief can find.  
TOMAZO (*To VERMANDERO*) Sir, I am satisfied; my  
injuries **190**  
Lie dead before me. I can exact no more,  
Unless my soul were loose, and could o'ertake  
Those black fugitives, that are fled from thence,  
To take a second vengeance. But there are wraths  
Deeper than mine, 'tis to be feared, about 'em.  
ALSEMERO What an opacous body had that moon  
That last changed on us! Here is beauty changed  
To ugly whoredom; here, servant-obedience  
To a master-sin, imperious murder;  
I, a supposed husband, changed embraces **200**  
With wantonness, but that was paid before;  
(*To TOMAZO*) Your change is come too, from an  
ignorant wrath  
To knowing friendship. Are there any more on's?  
ANTONIO Yes, sir, I was changed too, from a little ass  
as I was to a great fool as I am; and had like to ha'  
been changed to the gallows but that you know my  
innocence always excuses me.  
FRANCISCUS I was changed from a little wit to be stark  
mad,  
Almost for the same purpose.  
ISABELLA (*To ALIBIUS*) Your change is still behind,  
But deserve best your transformation: **210**  
You are a jealous coxcomb, keep schools of folly,  
And teach your scholars how to break your own  
head.  
ALIBIUS I see all apparent, wife, and will change now  
Into a better husband, and never keep

153 from distinction: anything identifying it as separate (from  
the filth of the common sewer)  
154 stars: fixed symbols of purity  
meteor: symbol of sublunary transience (and thus  
impurity)  
156-7 My loathing . . . ne'er believed: Beatrice's original  
loathing for De Flores predicted the present outcome, yet  
she ignored the warning  
163 barley-break: reference to the game (mentioned at  
III.iii.173-4) where some players end up in 'hell'  
165 heart: disposition, attitude (i.e. her original loathing)  
167 honour's prize: her maidenhead  
171 pledge: toast  
175 that token: probably the first wound (made in the closet)  
now recalled ('put in mind') by the second wound  
180 record: the record kept in heaven of earthly misdeeds

182 lose: forget  
186 quit: acquitted  
188 sensible: aware  
done: shown  
190 injuries: injustices (accounted for, or 'dead', now that the  
culprits are dead)  
193 black fugitives: the damned souls of Beatrice and De  
Flores now flying towards hell  
194 wraths: the punishments of hell  
196 opacous: clouded, ominous  
201 wantonness: of Diaphanta  
paid before: punished by her earlier death  
innocence: a) lack of guilt; b) foolishness  
207 behind: to come  
212 break your own head: make you a cuckold

Scholars that shall be wiser than myself.  
ALSEMERO (*To VERMANDERO*) Sir, you have yet a son's  
duty living;  
Please you, accept it. Let that your sorrow,  
As it goes from your eye, go from your heart.  
Man and his sorrow at the grave must part.

## Epilogue

ALSEMERO All we can do, to comfort one another, **220**  
To stay a brother's sorrow for a brother,  
To dry a child from the kind father's eyes,  
Is to no purpose; it rather multiplies.  
Your only smiles have power to cause re-live  
The dead again, or in their rooms to give  
Brother a new brother, father a child;  
If these appear, all griefs are reconciled.

*Exeunt omnes*

FINIS

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215 wiser: more clever, sane  
216 son's duty: Alsemero will still give Vermandero the duty  
of the son  
218 from your eye: by weeping

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221 stay: bring to a close  
223 multiplies: increases the grief  
224 Your only smiles: your smiles only  
225 in their rooms: in their place (instead of the dead)  
226 Brother a . . . a child: Alsemero will be a new brother to  
Tomazo and a new child to Vermandero  
227 these appear: a) the smiles (of the audience); and  
therefore b) the new relationships

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## John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*

First performed 1629–33

First published 1633

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John Ford's preoccupation with melancholy, madness and obsessive sexuality has intrigued and sometimes appalled readers across the centuries. The consistent level of grim irony in his plays (his characters tend 'unwittingly' to predict later events) and his compelling verse invite speculation over the kind of intelligence that could have created *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. During the early twentieth century it was not unusual to find the play dismissed by critics for its unwholesome decadence, the implication being that, by the time Ford was writing, the theatre had succumbed to mere sensationalism and spectacle, and that the days of thoughtful, philosophical drama, epitomised by Shakespeare, were now over. However, as Marion Lomax has remarked, Ford 'tantalises with apparent echoes of, or allusions to, other Renaissance drama (including some of Shakespeare's best-known plays), which is not a sign of slavish dependence but a way of stressing the different contexts and perspectives of his own work – and those contexts and perspectives often owe their fascination to their very perverseness' (Lomax 1995: viii).

This is important when we consider the fairly obvious similarities between this play and *Romeo and Juliet* (1595). The Italian setting recalls Shakespeare's Verona and there are clear parallels between the two sets of lovers, as well as between Shakespeare's Nurse and Ford's Putana, and between Friar Lawrence and Friar Bonaventura, Capulet and Florio. The plays also share an interest in matters of spectacle and occasion: banquets or balls, swordplay, disguise, poisonings and other, more sudden, deaths. Yet in *Romeo and Juliet* audiences are at least invited to sympathise with the lovers' dilemma and to condemn their parents' feuding. While Shakespeare's play could be rewritten to end happily, Giovanni and Annabella's incestuous love posits an extreme and insoluble problem, allowing displays of sexuality and foregrounding the politics of gender at a consistently high level of tension and debate. In Ford's Parma, almost everyone is preoccupied with their sexuality. The play shows how infidelity can lead to revenge, how the potentially creative act of sexual intercourse can lead to death, and how sexual desire affects human relationships more fundamentally than the institutions (marriage, family and religion) which attempt to keep it in check.

Historians have noted the establishment in the seventeenth century of a regime of sexual repression which was central to the doctrines of social and familial uniformity associated with Puritanism. A relative tolerance of sexual transgression in earlier times gave way to a new policing of the boundaries of sexual experience. However, in order to contain and classify what was considered 'normal', such doctrines had to locate what was considered 'deviant'. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* can be seen in relation to a process through which an evolution of sexual mores into the modern institutions of marriage and the family had paradoxically opened to view a potentially subversive, alternative realm of transgression. In short, to repress sexuality in terms of the religious and social codes which were to become important during the seventeenth century (and since), it was necessary to re-press them (in the sense of re-presenting or re-printing them) in a diverse set of contemporary books, pamphlets, sermons and plays. Indeed, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* may have reminded its audiences of the real case of Sir Giles Allington, who was put on trial in 1631 for marrying the daughter of his half-sister. Incest may have interested contemporary society because it tested the authority and the boundaries of society's sexual codes.

Just as the play repeatedly connects female sexuality with disease and dysfunction, rather than with fertility and reproduction, and food and drink bring death rather than sustenance, the religious doctrine of Bonaventura is seen as unable to contain the lovers' desire. Parma's judicial system, and especially as represented by the Cardinal, seems to serve only its own agents. Some of the moral relativism Ford dramatises has an echo or parallel in the twenty-first century, and this is perhaps why the play still fascinates modern readers and audiences, yet it is important to read the play in terms of a seventeenth-century shift in consciousness with regard to gender and sexuality which itself has to be viewed in relation to the ever-changing religious and moral circumstances which helped define the intellectual environment in which Ford worked. Although critics and historians have noted the strength of contemporary orthodox teaching in favour of a regulated sexuality, they have also accepted that Ford's



was a period of considerable and growing religious scepticism.

That incest was against God's will was clear from biblical sources (Leviticus 20.17 and Deuteronomy 27.22), but a comment in Thomas Beard's totally orthodox treatise, *The Theatre of God's Judgement* (1597), is revealing in that he feels compelled to extend the argument against incest into a secular and non-Christian realm, remarking that 'incest is a wicked and abominable sin, and forbidden both by the law of God and man, in so much that the very heathen held it in detestation' (p. 356). The implication is that incest offends not only against Christian teaching but also against a uniformly natural law recognised by 'man' in general and thus even by non-Christians. Although it was presumably not Beard's intention to undermine Christian doctrine, there is a slight hesitation in this remark over the universality of Christian authority in the material shaping of human behaviour. Much exercised as to how to celebrate classical civilisations whilst acknowledging their pre-Christianity, and intrigued by alluring colonial encounters with the inhabitants of overseas lands, early Stuart intellectuals were compelled to test the authority of Christianity against alternative authorities such as nature, fate and human wit (or intelligence). Against the corrupt moral world of his Parma, Ford manages to invite an audience's sympathy, if only for a moment, on behalf of actors playing out one of the great religious and secular taboos of the period. And even if the audience observes the restoration of a kind of order at the end of the play, and the inevitable deaths of those who have transgressed, it has still glimpsed *en route* to this closure a suggested 'other world' which, finally contained as it may be, still exists as an experiment only possible in the complex set of aesthetic co-ordinates that go into making theatre. Form against form, the theatre powerfully and publicly interrogates for its audience the set positions prescribed more narrowly in the private act of reading a treatise or listening to a sermon. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* remains a powerful and compelling demonstration of this kind of experiment.

*'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was first staged between 1629 and 1633 at the Phoenix Theatre in Drury Lane, a private theatre. Samuel Pepys witnessed a revival of the play in 1661 at the Salisbury Court, but it was only in the twentieth century that it began to be performed regularly. It is likely that twenty-first century audiences and readers will continue to take an interest in Ford's disturbing, yet compelling, work.

### Textual note

The copytext for this edition is the quarto of 1633 (referred to in the footnotes as Q). Copies of this edition are held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the British Library in London. Since the quarto includes his

dedication to John Mordaunt it is generally thought that Ford authorised its publication. The quarto divided the play into five acts; the scene divisions in this version are those established by modern editors.

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- Thomas Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedy* (1585)
- William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus* (1593)
- William Shakespeare, *Richard III* (1593)
- William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (1595)
- William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1600)
- Thomas Middleton or Cyril Tourneur, *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1606)
- George Chapman, *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (1610)
- Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611)
- John Webster, *The White Devil* (1612)
- John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614)
- Thomas Middleton, *The Changeling* (1622)
- Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women* (1625)
- John Ford, *The Broken Heart* (1631)

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## *'Tis Pity She's a Whore (1633)*

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### To My Friend the Author

With admiration I beheld this Whore  
Adorned with beauty such as might restore  
(If ever being as thy muse hath famed)  
Her Giovanni, in his love unblamed:  
The ready Graces lent their willing aid,  
Pallas herself now played the chambermaid,  
And helped to put her dressings on. Secure  
Rest thou that thy name herein shall endure  
To th' end of age; and Annabella be  
Gloriously fair, even in her infamy.

THOMAS ELLICE

### To the Truly Noble John, Earl of Peterborough, Lord Mordaunt, Baron of Turvey

MY LORD,  
Where a truth of merit hath a general warrant, there  
love is but a debt, acknowledgment a justice. Greatness  
cannot often claim virtue by inheritance; yet in this,  
yours appears most eminent, for that you are not more  
rightly heir to your fortunes than glory shall be to your  
memory. Sweetness of disposition ennobles a freedom  
of birth; in both, your lawful interest adds honour to  
your own name and mercy to my presumption. Your

---

To My Friend the Author: the poem by Thomas Ellice appears in only a few copies of the Quarto. Ellice was probably the brother of Robert Ellice of Gray's Inn, to whom Ford dedicated another play, *The Lover's Melancholy*. Thomas entered Gray's Inn in 1626 and was responsible for a commendatory poem for Sir William Davenant's 1629 play *Albovine*.

To the Truly Noble . . . Turvey: although Ford's patron came from an old Catholic family, he had been converted to Anglicanism by the time of his marriage to the wealthy Elizabeth Howard. Despite holding a favoured position in the court of James I and being created first Earl of Peterborough by Charles I, he raised a regiment for Parliament against the King in 1642, the year of his death. Little is known of his relationship with Ford

noble allowance of these first fruits of my leisure in the action emboldens my confidence of your as noble construction in this presentment; especially since my service must ever owe particular duty to your favours by a particular engagement. The gravity of the subject may easily excuse the lightness of the title, otherwise I had been a severe judge against mine own guilt. Princes have vouchsafed grace to trifles offered from a purity of devotion; your lordship may likewise please to admit into your good opinion, with these weak endeavours, the constancy of affection from the sincere lover of your deserts in honour,

20

JOHN FORD

### The Actors' Names

BONAVENTURA, *a friar*

A CARDINAL, *nuncio to the Pope*

SORANZO, *a nobleman*

FLORIO, *a citizen of Parma*

DONADO, *another citizen*

---

9 allowance: approval

9-10 in the action: on the stage

11 construction: interpretation

in this presentment: in print

The Actors' Names: Ford's characters derive their names from a rich variety of literary and scholastic sources.

Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), which influenced much of Ford's work, mentions Bonaventura and Poggio as well-known Italian writers. Florio was probably suggested by John Florio's Italian dictionary *A World of Words* (1598) which translates *putana* as 'whore'.

George Whetstone's 1582 *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* provided the names Soranzo and Bergetto, while Hippolita is drawn from Hippolyta, the Amazon Queen, although an allusion to Hippolyte, the lustful wife of Acastus, would not have been lost on the better-educated members of Ford's audience. Philotis is from the Greek for 'love', and so on. The whole scheme of the actors' names provides clues about Ford's reading and its influence

GRIMALDI, *a Roman gentleman*  
 GIOVANNI, *son to Florio*  
 BERGETTO, *nephew to Donado*  
 RICARDETTO, *a supposed physician*  
 VASQUES, *servant to Soranzo*  
 POGGIO, *servant to Bergetto*  
 BANDITTI, *Officers, Servants, etc.*

**Women**

ANNABELLA, *daughter to Florio*  
 HIPPOLITA, *wife to Richardetto*  
 PHILOTIS, *his niece*  
 PUTANA, *tut'ress to Annabella*

**The scene**

PARMA

**Act I, scene i**

*Enter* FRIAR *and* GIOVANNI

FRIAR Dispute no more in this, for know, young man,  
 These are no school-points; nice philosophy  
 May tolerate unlikely arguments,  
 But Heaven admits no jest: wits that presumed  
 On wit too much, by striving how to prove  
 There was no God, with foolish grounds of art,  
 Discovered first the nearest way to hell,  
 And filled the world with devilish atheism.  
 Such questions, youth, are fond; for better 'tis  
 To bless the sun than reason why it shines;  
 Yet He thou talk'st of is above the sun.  
 No more; I may not hear it.

GIOVANNI Gentle father,  
 To you I have unclasped my burdened soul,  
 Emptied the storehouse of my thoughts and I

Made myself poor of secrets; have not left  
 Another word untold, which hath not spoke  
 All what I ever durst, or think, or know;  
 And yet is here the comfort I shall have,  
 Must I not do what all men else may, love?

FRIAR Yes, you may love, fair son.

GIOVANNI Must I not praise  
 That beauty which, if framed anew, the gods 21  
 Would make a god of, if they had it there,  
 And kneel to it, as I do kneel to them?

FRIAR Why, foolish madman!

GIOVANNI Shall a peevish sound,  
 A customary form, from man to man,  
 Of brother and of sister, be a bar  
 'Twixt my perpetual happiness and me?  
 Say that we had one father, say one womb  
 (Curse to my joys) gave both us life and birth;  
 Are we not therefore each to other bound 30  
 So much the more by nature? By the links  
 Of blood, of reason? Nay, if you will have't,  
 Even of religion, to be ever one,  
 One soul, one flesh, one love, one heart, one all?

FRIAR Have done, unhappy youth, for thou art lost.

GIOVANNI Shall then, for that I am her brother born,  
 My joys be ever banished from her bed?  
 No, father; in your eyes I see the change  
 Of pity and compassion; from your age,  
 As from a sacred oracle, distils 40  
 The life of counsel: tell me, holy man,  
 What cure shall give me ease in these extremes?

FRIAR Repentance, son, and sorrow for this sin:

For, thou hast moved a Majesty above  
 With thy unranked (almost) blasphemy.

GIOVANNI O do not speak of that, dear confessor.

FRIAR Art thou, my son, that miracle of wit  
 Who once, within these three months, wert esteemed  
 A wonder of thine age, throughout Bononia?  
 How did the university applaud 50  
 Thy government, behaviour, learning, speech,  
 Sweetness, and all that could make up a man!  
 I was proud of my tutelage, and chose  
 Rather to leave my books than part with thee.  
 I did so: but the fruits of all my hopes  
 Are lost in thee, as thou art in thyself.  
 O, Giovanni, hast thou left the schools

PARMA: the northern Italian city is famous for its ancient university and for an elegance and sophistication characteristic of neighbouring cities such as Verona, Mantua and Venice, which figure prominently in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries as places of romance, double-dealing and intrigue

2 school-points: topics for scholarly debate

4 admits: allows

6 art: learning

9 fond: foolish

24 peevish: trifling, petty

25 customary form: convention

32 Of blood: of kinship, family

45 unranked: deranged, crazy

49 Bononia: Bologna, not far from Parma, famous for its university

51 government: general conduct and possibly, here, self-discipline

57 Giovanni: pronounced with four syllables rather than the three of modern Italian

Of knowledge to converse with lust and death?  
 For death waits on thy lust. Look through the world,  
 And thou shalt see a thousand faces shine 60  
 More glorious than this idol thou ador'st:  
 Leave her, and take thy choice, 'tis much less sin,  
 Though in such games as those they lose that win.

GIOVANNI It were more ease to stop the ocean  
 From floats and ebbs than to dissuade my vows.

FRIAR Then I have done, and in thy wilful flames  
 Already see thy ruin; Heaven is just.  
 Yet hear my counsel.

GIOVANNI As a voice of life.

FRIAR Hie to thy father's house, there lock thee fast  
 Alone within thy chamber, then fall down 70  
 On both thy knees, and grovel on the ground:  
 Cry to thy heart, wash every word thou utter'st  
 In tears (and if 't be possible) of blood:  
 Beg Heaven to cleanse the leprosy of lust  
 That rots thy soul, acknowledge what thou art,  
 A wretch, a worm, a nothing: weep, sigh, pray  
 Three times a day, and three times every night.  
 For seven days' space do this, then if thou find'st  
 No change in thy desires, return to me:

I'll think on remedy. Pray for thyself 80  
 At home, whilst I pray for thee here.—Away,  
 My blessing with thee, we have need to pray.

GIOVANNI All this I'll do, to free me from the rod  
 Of vengeance; else I'll swear my fate's my god.

*Exeunt*

## Act I, scene ii

*Enter GRIMALDI and VASQUES ready to fight*

VASQUES Come sir, stand to your tackling; if you prove  
 craven, I'll make you run quickly.

GRIMALDI Thou art no equal match for me.

VASQUES Indeed I never went to the wars to bring

62 'tis much less sin: Brian Morris has pointed out that the view that fornication was a lesser sin than incest was probably based on the argument exemplified by Michel Montaigne in *Essais* which Ford may have read in John Florio's translation of 1603: 'The love we beare to women is very lawful; yet both Divinite bridle and restraine the same. I remember to have read in Saint Thomas, in a place where he condemneth marriages of kinsfolkes in forbidden degrees, this one reason amongst others; that the love a man beareth to such a woman may be immoderate; for, if the wedlocke, or husband-like affection be sound and perfect, as it ought to be, and also surcharged with that a man oweth to alliance and kindred; there is no doubt but that surcease may easily transport a husband beyond the bounds of reason'

65 floats: tides, pronounced with three syllables  
 vows: prayers, as in the Latin *vota*

1 tackling: weaponry

home news, nor cannot play the mountebank for a  
 meal's meat, and swear I got my wounds in the field.  
 See you these grey hairs? They'll not flinch for a  
 bloody nose. Wilt thou to this gear?

GRIMALDI Why, slave, think'st thou I'll balance my  
 reputation with a cast-suit? Call thy master, he shall  
 know that I dare— 11

VASQUES Scold like a cot-quean, that's your profession.  
 Thou poor shadow of a soldier, I will make thee  
 know my master keeps servants thy betters in quality  
 and performance. Com'st thou to fight or prate?

GRIMALDI Neither, with thee. I am a Roman and a  
 gentleman; one that have got mine honour with  
 expense of blood.

VASQUES You are a lying coward and a fool. Fight, or by  
 these hilts I'll kill thee—brave my lord!—you'll fight?

GRIMALDI Provoke me not, for if thou dost— 21

VASQUES Have at you!

*They fight; GRIMALDI hath the worst*

*Enter FLORIO, DONADO, and SORANZO*

FLORIO What mean these sudden broils so near my  
 doors?

Have you not other places but my house  
 To vent the spleen of your disordered bloods?  
 Must I be haunted still with such unrest

As not to eat or sleep in peace at home?  
 Is this your love, Grimaldi? Fie, 'tis naught.

DONADO And Vasques, I may tell thee 'tis not well  
 To broach these quarrels; you are ever forward 30  
 In seconding contentions.

*Enter above ANNABELLA and PUTANA*

FLORIO What's the ground?

SORANZO That, with your patience, signors, I'll resolve:

This gentleman, whom fame reports a soldier,  
 (For else I know not) rivals me in love  
 To Signor Florio's daughter, to whose ears  
 He still prefers his suit, to my disgrace,  
 Thinking the way to recommend himself  
 Is to disparage me in his report.

But know, Grimaldi, though, may be, thou art  
 My equal in thy blood, yet this bewrays 40

8 gear: the business to hand, the fight

10 cast-suit: a servant, one who might wear his master's  
 cast-off clothing

12 cot-quean: a 'cottage-wife', a shrill woman or, in this  
 case, an effeminate man

14 quality: birth, rank

23 sudden: violent

SD *Enter above*: on the upper stage, allowing them to witness  
 unobserved the action below. They descend to the main  
 stage during Giovanni's soliloquy (ll. 150–69)

32 resolve: answer

40 bewrays: reveals

A lowness in thy mind which, wert thou noble,  
 Thou wouldst as much disdain as I do thee  
 For this unworthiness; and on this ground  
 I willed my servant to correct his tongue,  
 Holding a man so base no match for me.

VASQUES And had not your sudden coming prevented  
 us, I had let my gentleman blood under the gills; I  
 should have wormed you, sir, for running mad.

GRIMALDI I'll be revenged, Soranzo. 49

VASQUES On a dish of warm broth to stay your  
 stomach—do, honest innocence, do; spoon-meat is a  
 wholesomer diet than a Spanish blade.

GRIMALDI Remember this.

SORANZO I fear thee not, Grimaldi. *Exit GRIMALDI*

FLORIO My Lord Soranzo, this is strange to me,  
 Why you should storm, having my word engaged:  
 Owing her heart, what need you doubt her ear?  
 Losers may talk by law of any game.

VASQUES Yet the villainy of words, Signor Florio, may  
 be such as would make any unspleened dove choleric.  
 Blame not my lord in this. 61

FLORIO Be you more silent.  
 I would not for my wealth my daughter's love  
 Should cause the spilling of one drop of blood.  
 Vasques, put up, let's end this fray in wine.

*Exeunt FLORIO, DONADO, SORANZO and VASQUES*

PUTANA How like you this, child? Here's threatening,  
 challenging, quarrelling, and fighting, on every side,  
 and all is for your sake; you had need look to yourself,  
 charge, you'll be stolen away sleeping else shortly.

ANNABELLA But, tut'tress, such a life gives no content  
 To me, my thoughts are fixed on other ends; 71  
 Would you would leave me.

PUTANA Leave you? No marvel else. Leave me no  
 leaving, charge; this is love outright. Indeed I blame  
 you not, you have choice fit for the best lady in Italy.

ANNABELLA Pray do not talk so much.

PUTANA Take the worst with the best, there's Grimaldi  
 the soldier, a very well-timbered fellow. They say he  
 is a Roman, nephew to the Duke Montferrato, they  
 say he did good service in the wars against the

Milanese, but 'faith, charge, I do not like him, an't be  
 for nothing but for being a soldier; not one amongst  
 twenty of your skirmishing captains but have some  
 privy maim or other that mars their standing upright.  
 I like him the worse, he crinkles so much in the  
 hams; though he might serve if there were no more  
 men, yet he's not the man I would choose. 87

ANNABELLA Fie, how thou prat'st.

PUTANA As I am a very woman, I like Signor Soranzo  
 well; he is wise, and what is more, rich; and what is  
 more than that, kind, and what is more than all this,  
 a nobleman; such a one, were I the fair Annabella  
 myself, I would wish and pray for. Then he is  
 bountiful; besides, he is handsome, and by my troth,  
 I think wholesome (and that's news in a gallant of  
 three and twenty); liberal, that I know; loving, that  
 you know; and a man sure, else he could never ha'  
 purchased such a good name with Hippolita, the  
 lusty widow, in her husband's lifetime: and 'twere but  
 for that report, sweet-heart, would 'a were thine.  
 Commend a man for his qualities, but take a husband  
 as he is a plain-sufficient, naked man: such a one is  
 for your bed, and such a one is Signor Soranzo, my  
 life for't. 104

ANNABELLA Sure the woman took her morning's  
 draught too soon.

*Enter BERGETTO and POGGIO*

PUTANA But look, sweetheart, look what thing comes  
 now: here's another of your ciphers to fill up the  
 number. O brave old ape in a silken coat. Observe.

BERGETTO Didst thou think, Poggio, that I would spoil  
 my new clothes, and leave my dinner, to fight? 111

POGGIO No, sir, I did not take you for so arrant a baby.

BERGETTO I am wiser than so: for I hope, Poggio, thou  
 never heardst of an elder brother that was a coxcomb.  
 Didst, Poggio?

POGGIO Never indeed, sir, as long as they had either  
 land or money left them to inherit.

48 wormed: refers to the contemporary practice of cutting  
 out a small ligament beneath a dog's tongue which was  
 supposed to prevent rabies

51 innocence: fool  
 spoon-meat: baby food

57 Owing: possessing

60 unspleened: it was thought that birds had no spleen and  
 were therefore incapable of becoming angry or 'choleric'

65 put up: sheathe your sword

71 ends: matters

78 well-timbered: well-built

79 Duke Montferrato: Montferrat became a duchy in 1575  
 having for a long time been controlled by the Gonzaga  
 family of the Mantua area near Parma

84 mars . . . upright: the implication is of sexual impotence;  
 'privy' or 'private' meaning both secret and referring to  
 the genitals

86 he might serve: he 'might do' but also that he might give  
 sexual satisfaction

89 very: true, real

95 wholesome: free from disease, particularly that of a sexual  
 nature

96 liberal: generous

98 such a good name: a favourable reputation. This is the  
 first reference to Soranzo's affair with Hippolita

105-6 morning's draught: alcoholic drinks taken in the morning

108 ciphers: nonentities

109 O brave old ape: refers to an old proverb: 'An ape is an  
 ape though dressed in scarlet'

114 coxcomb: simpleton

BERGETTO Is it possible, Poggio? O monstrous. Why, I'll undertake with a handful of silver to buy a headful of wit at any time; but sirrah, I have another purchase in hand, I shall have the wench, mine uncle says. I will but wash my face, and shift socks, and then have at her i'faith. Mark my pace, Poggio. 123

POGGIO Sir—(Aside) I have seen an ass and a mule trot the Spanish pavin with a better grace, I know not how often.

*Exeunt BERGETTO and POGGIO*

ANNABELLA This idiot haunts me too.

PUTANA Ay, ay, he needs no description; the rich magnifico that is below with your father, charge, Signor Donado his uncle, for that he means to make this his cousin a golden calf, thinks that you will be a right Israelite and fall down to him presently: but I hope I have tutored you better. They say a fool's bauble is a lady's playfellow, yet you having wealth enough, you need not cast upon the dearth of flesh at any rate: hang him, innocent. 136

*Enter GIOVANNI*

ANNABELLA But see, Putana, see: what blessed shape Of some celestial creature now appears? What man is he, that with such sad aspect Walks careless of himself?

PUTANA Where?

ANNABELLA Look below. 140

PUTANA O, 'tis your brother, sweet.

ANNABELLA Ha!

PUTANA 'Tis your brother.

ANNABELLA Sure 'tis not he; this is some woeful thing  
 Wrapped up in grief, some shadow of a man.  
 Alas, he beats his breast, and wipes his eyes  
 Drowned all in tears: methinks I hear him sigh.  
 Let's down, Putana, and partake the cause;

125 pavin: pavan, a courtly dance

129 magnifico: noble

131 cousin: generally a kinsman but here specifically a nephew

131-2 a golden calf . . . Israelite: biblical reference (see Exodus 32. 6-7) in which Aaron persuades the people to worship a golden calf he made from their earnings: 'And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves'

134 bauble: baton or stick, but with an indecent implication. The origin of the word is 'baubel' meaning a 'play thing'

134-6 yet you . . . rate: you are rich and do not need to gamble on Bergetto for fear of a shortage of alternative suitors

SD *Enter GIOVANNI*: on the stage below

146 partake: be informed of

I know my brother, in the love he bears me,  
 Will not deny me partage in his sadness.  
 My soul is full of heaviness and fear.

*Exit with PUTANA*

GIOVANNI Lost. I am lost. My fates have doomed my death. 150

The more I strive, I love; the more I love  
 The less I hope: I see my ruin, certain.  
 What judgement or endeavours could apply  
 To my incurable and restless wounds  
 I thoroughly have examined, but in vain.  
 O that it were not in religion sin  
 To make our love a god, and worship it.  
 I have even wearied Heaven with prayers, dried up  
 The spring of my continual tears, even starved  
 My veins with daily fasts: what wit or art 160  
 Could counsel, I have practised; but alas,  
 I find all these but dreams and old men's tales  
 To fright unsteady youth; I'm still the same.  
 Or I must speak, or burst. 'Tis not, I know,  
 My lust, but 'tis my fate that leads me on.  
 Keep fear and low faint-hearted shame with slaves;  
 I'll tell her that I love her, though my heart  
 Were rated at the price of that attempt.  
 O me! She comes.

*Enter ANNABELLA and PUTANA*

ANNABELLA Brother.

GIOVANNI (Aside) If such a thing  
 As courage dwell in men, ye heavenly powers, 170  
 Now double all that virtue in my tongue.

ANNABELLA Why, brother, will you not speak to me?

GIOVANNI Yes; how d'ee, sister?

ANNABELLA Howsoever I am, methinks you are not well.

PUTANA Bless us, why are you so sad, sir?

GIOVANNI Let me entreat you, leave us a while, Putana.

Sister, I would be private with you.

ANNABELLA Withdraw, Putana.

PUTANA I will. (Aside) If this were any other company for her, I should think my absence an office of some credit; but I will leave them together. *Exit PUTANA*

GIOVANNI Come, sister, lend your hand, let's walk together. 182

I hope you need not blush to walk with me;

Here's none but you and I.

ANNABELLA How's this?

GIOVANNI Faith, I mean no harm.

ANNABELLA Harm?

GIOVANNI No, good faith; how is't with 'ee?

155 thoroughly: thoroughly

160 what wit or art: intelligence or medical knowledge

180-1 of some credit: deserving payment

ANNABELLA (*Aside*) I trust he be not frantic.—I am very well, brother.

GIOVANNI Trust me, but I am sick, I fear so sick 190  
'Twill cost my life.

ANNABELLA Mercy forbid it. 'Tis not so, I hope.

GIOVANNI I think you love me, sister.

ANNABELLA Yes, you know I do.

GIOVANNI I know't indeed.—Yare very fair.

ANNABELLA Nay then, I see you have a merry sickness.

GIOVANNI That's as it proves. The poets feign, I read,  
That Juno for her forehead did exceed  
All other goddesses: but I durst swear  
Your forehead exceeds hers, as hers did theirs. 200

ANNABELLA Troth, this is pretty.

GIOVANNI Such a pair of stars  
As are thine eyes would, like Promethean fire,  
If gently glanced, give life to senseless stones.

ANNABELLA Fie upon 'ee.

GIOVANNI The lily and the rose, most sweetly strange,  
Upon your dimpled cheeks do strive for change.  
Such lips would tempt a saint; such hands as those  
Would make an anchorite lascivious.

ANNABELLA D'ee mock me, or flatter me?

GIOVANNI If you would see a beauty more exact 210  
Than art can counterfeit or nature frame,  
Look in your glass and there behold your own.

ANNABELLA O you are a trim youth.

GIOVANNI Here.  
*Offers his dagger to her*

ANNABELLA What to do?

GIOVANNI And here's my breast, strike home.  
Rip up my bosom, there thou shalt behold  
A heart in which is writ the truth I speak.  
Why stand 'ee?

ANNABELLA Are you earnest?

GIOVANNI Yes, most earnest.  
You cannot love?

ANNABELLA Whom?

GIOVANNI Me. My tortured soul  
Hath felt affliction in the heat of death.  
O Annabella, I am quite undone. 220  
The love of thee, my sister, and the view  
Of thy immortal beauty hath untuned  
All harmony both of my rest and life.  
Why d'ee not strike?

ANNABELLA Forbid it, my just fears.

189 frantic: insane

198 That Juno . . . did exceed: Juno, the significantly beautiful wife, but also the sister, of the god Jupiter

202 Promethean fire: Prometheus stole fire from heaven to give life to the man and woman he had created from clay

205 strange: opposed

206 change: interchange

208 anchorite: hermit

If this be true, 'twere fitter I were dead.

GIOVANNI True, Annabella; 'tis no time to jest.  
I have too long suppressed the hidden flames  
That almost have consumed me; I have spent  
Many a silent night in sighs and groans,  
Ran over all my thoughts, despised my fate, 230  
Reasoned against the reasons of my love,  
Done all that smoothed-cheek virtue could advise,  
But found all bootless: 'tis my destiny  
That you must either love, or I must die.

ANNABELLA Comes this in sadness from you?

GIOVANNI Let some mischief  
Befall me soon, if I dissemble aught.

ANNABELLA You are my brother Giovanni.

GIOVANNI You  
My sister Annabella; I know this:  
And could afford you instance why to love  
So much the more for this; to which intent 240  
Wise nature first in your creation meant  
To make you mine; else't had been sin and foul  
To share one beauty to a double soul.  
Nearness in birth or blood doth but persuade  
A nearer nearness in affection.  
I have asked counsel of the holy church,  
Who tells me I may love you, and 'tis just  
That since I may, I should; and will, yes, will.  
Must I now live, or die?

ANNABELLA Live. Thou hast won  
The field, and never fought; what thou hast urged  
My captive heart had long ago resolved. 251  
I blush to tell thee—but I'll tell thee now—  
For every sigh that thou hast spent for me  
I have sighed ten; for every tear shed twenty:  
And not so much for that I loved, as that  
I durst not say I loved, nor scarcely think it.

GIOVANNI Let not this music be a dream, ye gods,  
For pity's sake, I beg 'ee.

ANNABELLA On my knees, *She kneels*  
Brother, even by our mother's dust, I charge you,  
Do not betray me to your mirth or hate, 260  
Love me, or kill me, brother.

GIOVANNI On my knees, *He kneels*  
Sister, even by my mother's dust, I charge you,  
Do not betray me to your mirth or hate,  
Love me, or kill me, sister.

ANNABELLA You mean good sooth then?

GIOVANNI In good troth I do,  
And so do you, I hope: say, I'm in earnest.

ANNABELLA I'll swear't, I.

GIOVANNI And I, and by this kiss, *Kisses her*

233 bootless: useless

235 sadness: seriousness

255 for that: because

265 sooth: truth



(Once more, yet once more; now let's rise by this)

*They rise*

I would not change this minute for Elysium.  
What must we now do?

ANNABELLA What you will.

GIOVANNI Come then, 270

After so many tears as we have wept,  
Let's learn to court in smiles, to kiss, and sleep.

*Exeunt*

## Act I, scene iii

*Enter FLORIO and DONADO*

FLORIO Signor Donado, you have said enough,  
I understand you; but would have you know  
I will not force my daughter 'gainst her will.  
You see I have but two, a son and her;  
And he is so devoted to his book,  
As I must tell you true, I doubt his health:  
Should he miscarry, all my hopes rely  
Upon my girl; as for worldly fortune,  
I am, I thank my stars, blest with enough.  
My care is how to match her to her liking:  
I would not have her marry wealth, but love,  
And if she like your nephew, let him have her.  
Here's all that I can say.

DONADO Sir, you say well,  
Like a true father, and for my part I,  
If the young folks can like ('twixt you and me),  
Will promise to assure my nephew presently  
Three thousand florins yearly during life,  
And after I am dead, my whole estate.

FLORIO 'Tis a fair proffer, sir; meantime your nephew  
Shall have free passage to commence his suit. 20  
If he can thrive, he shall have my consent.  
So for this time I'll leave you, signor. *Exit*

DONADO Well,  
Here's hope yet, if my nephew would have wit;  
But he is such another dunce, I fear  
He'll never win the wench. When I was young  
I could have done't, i'faith, and so shall he  
If he will learn of me; and in good time  
He comes himself.

*Enter BERGETTO and POGGIO*

268 let's rise by this: they rise, but also a sense of spiritual elevation

6 doubt: fear for

7 miscarry: come to harm

8 girl: pronounced as two syllables

16 presently: at once

23 wit: some intelligence

27 in good time: at an appropriate moment

How now, Bergetto, whither away so fast? 29

BERGETTO O uncle, I have heard the strangest news  
that ever came out of the mint, have I not, Poggio?

POGGIO Yes indeed, sir.

DONADO What news, Bergetto?

BERGETTO Why, look ye, uncle, my barber told me just  
now that there is a fellow come to town who  
undertakes to make a mill go without the mortal help  
of any water or wind, only with sand-bags: and this  
fellow hath a strange horse, a most excellent beast, I'll  
assure you, uncle (my barber says), whose head, to  
the wonder of all Christian people, stands just behind  
where his tail is. Is't not true, Poggio? 41

POGGIO So the barber swore, forsooth.

DONADO And you are running thither?

BERGETTO Ay forsooth, uncle.

DONADO Wilt thou be a fool still? Come sir, you shall  
not go: you have more mind of a puppet-play than on  
the business I told ye; why, thou great baby, wilt  
never have wit, wilt make thyself a may-game to all  
the world?

POGGIO Answer for yourself, master. 50

IO BERGETTO Why, uncle, should I sit at home still, and  
not go abroad to see fashions like other gallants?

DONADO To see hobby-horses. What wise talk, I pray,  
had you with Annabella, when you were at Signor  
Florio's house?

BERGETTO O, the wench! Uds sa' me, uncle, I tickled  
her with a rare speech, that I made her almost burst  
her belly with laughing.

DONADO Nay, I think so; and what speech was't?

BERGETTO What did I say, Poggio? 60

POGGIO Forsooth, my master said that he loved her almost  
as well as he loved parmesent, and swore (I'll be sworn  
for him) that she wanted but such a nose as his was to  
be as pretty a young woman as any was in Parma.

DONADO O gross!

BERGETTO Nay, uncle, then she asked me whether my  
father had any more children than myself: and I said

29 How . . . fast: line given to Poggio in Q but to Donado  
in all editions since William Weber's *The Dramatic Works  
of John Ford* (1811)

31 that . . . mint: new or fresh, as in a newly minted coin  
36-7 undertakes . . . sandbags: a machine displaying perpetual  
motion

38-41 a strange horse . . . his tail is: a trick seen at  
contemporary fairs

46 have more mind of: are more interested in

48 a may-game: laughing-stock, a butt for ridicule in the  
festivities associated with the first of May

53 hobby-horses: performers dressed as horses

56 Uds sa' me: God save me

tickled: amused

62 parmesent: parmesan, the local cheese

63 wanted: lacked

'No, 'twere better he should have had his brains knocked out first.'

DONADO This is intolerable. 70

BERGETTO Then said she 'Will Signor Donado your uncle leave you all his wealth?'

DONADO Ha! That was good; did she harp upon that string?

BERGETTO Did she harp upon that string? Ay, that she did. I answered 'Leave me all his wealth? Why, woman, he hath no other wit; if he had, he should hear on't to his everlasting glory and confusion: I know,' quoth I, 'I am his white boy, and will not be gulled'; and with that she fell into a great smile and went away. Nay, I did fit her. 81

DONADO Ah, sirrah, then I see there is no changing of nature. Well, Bergetto, I fear thou wilt be a very ass still.

BERGETTO I should be sorry for that, uncle.

DONADO Come, come you home with me. Since you are no better a speaker, I'll have you write to her after some courtly manner, and enclose some rich jewel in the letter.

BERGETTO Ay marry, that will be excellent. 90

DONADO Peace, innocent.

Once in my time I'll set my wits to school,  
If all fail, 'tis but the fortune of a fool.

BERGETTO Poggio, 'twill do, Poggio.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene i

*Enter GIOVANNI and ANNABELLA, as from their chamber*

GIOVANNI Come Annabella: no more sister now,  
But love, a name more gracious; do not blush,  
Beauty's sweet wonder, but be proud to know  
That yielding thou hast conquered, and inflamed  
A heart whose tribute is thy brother's life.

ANNABELLA And mine is his. O, how these stol'n contents  
Would print a modest crimson on my cheeks,  
Had any but my heart's delight prevailed.

GIOVANNI I marvel why the chaster of your sex  
Should think this pretty toy called maidenhead 10  
So strange a loss, when, being lost, 'tis nothing,  
And you are still the same.

ANNABELLA 'Tis well for you;  
Now you can talk.

77 wit: thought

78 glory: a malapropism by Bergetto for 'shame'

79 white boy: a pet or favourite

80 gulled: made a fool of

81 fit her: answer appropriately

10 toy: trifle

11 strange: extraordinary

GIOVANNI Music as well consists  
In th' ear as in the playing.

ANNABELLA O, y'are wanton.  
Tell on't, y'are best: do.

GIOVANNI Thou wilt chide me then.  
Kiss me:—so. Thus hung Jove on Leda's neck,  
And sucked divine ambrosia from her lips.  
I envy not the mightiest man alive,  
But hold myself in being king of thee  
More great than were I king of all the world. 20  
But I shall lose you, sweetheart.

ANNABELLA But you shall not.

GIOVANNI You must be married, mistress.

ANNABELLA Yes? To whom?

GIOVANNI Someone must have you.

ANNABELLA You must.

GIOVANNI Nay, some other.

ANNABELLA Now prithee do not speak so: without  
jesting,  
You'll make me weep in earnest.

GIOVANNI What, you will not?  
But tell me, sweet, canst thou be dared to swear  
That thou wilt live to me, and to no other?

ANNABELLA By both our loves I dare, for didst thou  
know,  
My Giovanni, how all suitors seem  
To my eyes hateful, thou wouldst trust me then. 30

GIOVANNI Enough, I take thy word. Sweet, we must  
part.  
Remember what thou vowst; keep well my heart.

ANNABELLA Will you be gone?

GIOVANNI I must.

ANNABELLA When to return?

GIOVANNI Soon.

ANNABELLA Look you do.

GIOVANNI Farewell. *Exit*

ANNABELLA Go where thou wilt, in mind I'll keep thee  
here,  
And where thou art, I know I shall be there.  
Guardian!

13–14 Music . . . playing: music is as much the art of listening as of playing, but also a sexual connotation since music is a metaphor of love-making and the ear refers to the female genitalia

16 thus hung Jove . . . neck: Giovanni pictures himself as Jove who, in a similarly unnatural act, seduced Leda

17 ambrosia: the food of the gods which gave them everlasting life

22 Yes? To whom?: Q reads 'Yes, to whom?' but modern editors prefer to suggest that Annabella is being more playful in the early speeches of this scene, unaware of Giovanni's seriousness

23 Someone must have you: in terms of marriage but also in the cruder sense of carnal possession

26 dared to: so daring as to

Enter PUTANA

PUTANA Child, how is't, child? Well, thank Heaven,  
ha?

ANNABELLA O guardian, what a paradise of joy  
Have I passed over! 40

PUTANA Nay, what a paradise of joy have you passed  
under! Why, now I commend thee, charge; fear  
nothing, sweetheart; what though he be your  
brother? Your brother's a man, I hope, and I say still,  
if a young wench feel the fit upon her, let her take  
anybody, father or brother, all is one.

ANNABELLA I would not have it known for all the  
world.

PUTANA Nor I, indeed, for the speech of the people;  
else 'twere nothing.

FLORIO (*within*) Daughter Annabella. 50

ANNABELLA O me, my father!—Here, sir!—Reach my  
work.

FLORIO (*within*) What are you doing?

ANNABELLA So: let him come now.

Enter FLORIO, RICHARDETTO *like a doctor of physic, and*  
PHILOTIS *with a lute in her hand*

FLORIO So hard at work? That's well; you lose no time.  
Look, I have brought you company; here's one,  
A learned doctor lately come from Padua,  
Much skilled in physic, and for that I see  
You have of late been sickly, I entreated  
This reverend man to visit you some time.

ANNABELLA Y'are very welcome, sir.

RICHARDETTO I thank you, mistress.  
Loud fame in large report hath spoke your praise 60  
As well for virtue as perfection:  
For which I have been bold to bring with me  
A kinswoman of mine, a maid, for song  
And music, one perhaps will give content;  
Please you to know her.

ANNABELLA They are parts I love,  
And she for them most welcome.

PHILOTIS Thank you, lady.

FLORIO Sir, now you know my house, pray make not  
strange  
And if you find my daughter need your art,  
I'll be your paymaster.

40 over: through

45 fit: sexual desire

48 for the speech of the people: i.e. to avoid a public scandal

51 Reach my work: pass me my needlework

55 Padua: an Italian city famous for its university medical  
school

56 physic: medicine  
for that: because

65 parts: abilities or qualities

67 pray make not strange: please do not be too formal

RICHARDETTO Sir, what I am  
She shall command.

FLORIO You shall bind me to you. 70

Daughter, I must have conference with you  
About some matters that concerns us both.  
Good master doctor, please you but walk in,  
We'll crave a little of your cousin's cunning.  
I think my girl hath not quite forgot  
To touch an instrument: she could have done't.  
We'll hear them both.

RICHARDETTO I'll wait upon you, sir.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene ii

Enter SORANZO *in his study reading a book*

SORANZO 'Love's measure is extreme, the comfort,  
pain:

The life unrest, and the reward disdain.  
What's here? Look't o'er again: 'tis so, so writes  
This smooth licentious poet in his rhymes.  
But Sannazar, thou lie'st, for had thy bosom  
Felt such oppression as is laid on mine,  
Thou would'st have kissed the rod that made thee  
smart.

To work then, happy muse, and contradict  
What Sannazar hath in his envy writ.  
'Love's measure is the mean, sweet his annoys, 10  
His pleasure's life, and his reward all joys.'  
Had Annabella lived when Sannazar  
Did in his brief encomium celebrate  
Venice, that queen of cities, he had left  
That verse which gained him such a sum of gold,  
And for one only look from Annabel  
Had writ of her and her diviner cheeks.  
O how my thoughts are—

VASQUES (*within*) Pray forbear; in rules of civility, let  
me give notice on't: I shall be taxed of my neglect of  
duty and service. 21

SORANZO What rude intrusion interrupts my peace?

74 your cousin's cunning: your niece's musical skills

76 To touch: to play

5 Sannazar: Jacopa Sannazaro (c. 1455–1530) was a  
Neopolitan love poet whose romance *Arcadia* was known  
in England

9 envy: ill will

10 mean: moderation

13 encomium: a short Latin poem

12–15 Had Annabella . . . sum of gold: Sannazaro had written  
a Latin poem in praise of Venice which was mentioned  
in Thomas Coryat's *Crudities* (1611) and, in translation, in  
a letter written from Venice to Robert Brown dated  
12 August 1621. Brown received the letter at the Middle  
Temple to which John Ford belonged

20 taxed of: blamed for



I hate thee and thy lust: you have been too foul. *Exit*  
 VASQUES (*Aside*) This part has been scurvily played.

HIPPOLITA How foolishly this beast contemns his fate,  
 And shuns the use of that which I more scorn  
 Than I once loved, his love. But let him go;  
 My vengeance shall give comfort to this woe.

*She offers to go away*

VASQUES Mistress, mistress, Madam Hippolita, pray, a  
 word or two!

HIPPOLITA With me, sir?

VASQUES With you, if you please. **110**

HIPPOLITA What is't?

VASQUES I know you are infinitely moved now, and you  
 think you have cause; some I confess you have, but  
 sure not so much as you imagine.

HIPPOLITA Indeed.

VASQUES O, you were miserably bitter, which you  
 followed even to the last syllable. Faith, you were  
 somewhat too shrewd; by my life you could not have  
 took my lord in a worse time, since I first knew him:  
 tomorrow you shall find him a new man. **120**

HIPPOLITA Well, I shall wait his leisure.

VASQUES Fie, this is not a hearty patience, it comes  
 sourly from you; troth, let me persuade you for once.

HIPPOLITA (*Aside*) I have it, and it shall be so; thanks,  
 opportunity!—Persuade me to what?

VASQUES Visit him in some milder temper. O if you  
 could but master a little your female spleen, how  
 might you win him.

HIPPOLITA He will never love me. Vasques, thou hast  
 been a too trusty servant to such a master, and I  
 believe thy reward in the end will fall out like mine.

VASQUES So perhaps too. **132**

HIPPOLITA Resolve thyself it will. Had I one so true, so  
 truly honest, so secret to my counsels, as thou hast  
 been to him and his, I should think it a slight  
 acquittance, not only to make him master of all I  
 have, but even of myself.

VASQUES O you are a noble gentlewoman.

HIPPOLITA Wilt thou feed always upon hopes? Well, I  
 know thou art wise, and seest the reward of an old  
 servant daily, what it is. **141**

VASQUES Beggary and neglect.

HIPPOLITA True: but Vasques, wert thou mine, and  
 wouldst be private to me and my designs, I here  
 protest myself and all what I can else call mine should  
 be at thy dispose.

102 scurvily played: badly acted

103 contemns: scorns

106 this woe: Q has 'his woe'

118 shrewd: outspoken

122 hearty: genuine

133 Resolve: assure

136 acquittance: discharge of a debt

144 be private to: be privy to

VASQUES (*Aside*) Work you that way, old mole? Then I  
 have the wind of you.—I were not worthy of it by any  
 desert that could lie within my compass; if I could—

HIPPOLITA What then? **150**

VASQUES I should then hope to live in these my old  
 years with rest and security.

HIPPOLITA Give me thy hand: now promise but thy  
 silence,

And help to bring to pass a plot I have,  
 And here in sight of Heaven, that being done,  
 I make thee lord of me and mine estate.

VASQUES Come, you are merry; this is such a happiness  
 that I can neither think or believe.

HIPPOLITA Promise thy secrecy, and 'tis confirmed. **159**

VASQUES Then here I call our good genii for witnesses,  
 whatsoever your designs are, or against whomsoever,  
 I will not only be a special actor therein, but never  
 disclose it till it be effected.

HIPPOLITA I take thy word, and with that, thee for  
 mine;

Come then, let's more confer of this anon.

On this delicious bane my thoughts shall banquet:  
 Revenge shall sweeten what my griefs have tasted.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene iii

*Enter* RICHARDETTO *and* PHILOTIS

RICHARDETTO Thou seest, my lovely niece, these  
 strange mishaps,

How all my fortunes turn to my disgrace,

Wherein I am but as a looker-on,

Whiles others act my shame, and I am silent.

PHILOTIS But uncle, wherein can this borrowed shape  
 Give you content?

RICHARDETTO I'll tell thee, gentle niece:

Thy wanton aunt in her lascivious riots

Lives now secure, thinks I am surely dead

In my late journey to Ligorn for you

(As I have caused it to be rumoured out). **10**

Now would I see with what an impudence

She gives scope to her loose adultery,

And how the common voice allows hereof:

Thus far I have prevailed.

PHILOTIS Alas, I fear

147–8 I have the wind of you: as a hunter scents the hunted, I  
 have knowledge of your intention

157 merry: joking

160 good genii: guardian spirits  
 for witnesses: Q reads 'foe-witnesses'

166 bane: poison

5 borrowed shape: a disguise, a term taken from actors'  
 costumes

13 how the . . . allows hereof: how people judge her

You mean some strange revenge.  
 RICHARDETTO O be not troubled;  
 Your ignorance shall plead for you in all.  
 But to our business: what, you learned for certain  
 How Signor Florio means to give his daughter  
 In marriage to Soranzo?  
 PHILOTIS Yes, for certain.  
 RICHARDETTO But how find you young Annabella's  
 love 20  
 Inclined to him?  
 PHILOTIS For aught I could perceive,  
 She neither fancies him or any else.  
 RICHARDETTO There's mystery in that which time  
 must show.  
 She used you kindly?  
 PHILOTIS Yes.  
 RICHARDETTO And craved your company?  
 PHILOTIS Often.  
 RICHARDETTO 'Tis well; it goes as I could wish.  
 I am the doctor now, and as for you,  
 None knows you; if all fail not, we shall thrive.  
 But who comes here?

Enter GRIMALDI

I know him: 'tis Grimaldi,  
 A Roman and a soldier, near allied  
 Unto the duke of Montferrato, one 30  
 Attending on the nuncio of the Pope  
 That now resides in Parma, by which means  
 He hopes to get the love of Annabella.  
 GRIMALDI Save you, sir.  
 RICHARDETTO And you, sir.  
 GRIMALDI I have heard  
 Of your approvèd skill, which through the city  
 Is freely talked of, and would crave your aid.  
 RICHARDETTO For what, sir?  
 GRIMALDI Marry, sir, for this—  
 But I would speak in private.  
 RICHARDETTO Leave us, cousin.  
 Exit PHILOTIS  
 GRIMALDI I love fair Annabella, and would know 40  
 Whether in art there may not be receipts  
 To move affection.  
 RICHARDETTO Sir, perhaps there may,  
 But these will nothing profit you.  
 GRIMALDI Not me?  
 RICHARDETTO Unless I be mistook, you are a man  
 Greatly in favour with the cardinal.

16 Your ignorance . . . in all: since you know nothing of my  
 plans you will not risk being held responsible for them  
 31 nuncio of the pope: the pope's official representative  
 34 Save you, sir: God save you, sir; a common greeting but  
 with an ironic sense in this encounter  
 40 art: Q has 'arts', the art of medicine  
 receipts: recipes for love potions

GRIMALDI What of that?  
 RICHARDETTO In duty to his grace,  
 I will be bold to tell you, if you seek  
 To marry Florio's daughter, you must first  
 Remove a bar 'twixt you and her.  
 GRIMALDI Who's that?  
 RICHARDETTO Soranzo is the man that hath her heart;  
 And while he lives, be sure you cannot speed. 50  
 GRIMALDI Soranzo! What, mine enemy! Is't he?  
 RICHARDETTO Is he your enemy?  
 GRIMALDI The man I hate  
 Worse than confusion;  
 I'll kill him straight.  
 RICHARDETTO Nay then, take mine advice  
 (Even for his grace's sake, the cardinal):  
 I'll find a time when he and she do meet,  
 Of which I'll give you notice, and to be sure  
 He shall not 'scape you, I'll provide a poison  
 To dip your rapier's point in; if he had  
 As many heads as Hydra had, he dies. 60  
 GRIMALDI But shall I trust thee, doctor?  
 RICHARDETTO As yourself;  
 Doubt not in aught. (*Aside*) Thus shall the fates  
 decree:  
 By me Soranzo falls, that ruined me.

Exeunt

## Act II, scene iv

Enter DONADO, BERGETTO and POGGIO

DONADO Well, sir, I must be content to be both your  
 secretary and your messenger myself. I cannot tell  
 what this letter may work, but as sure as I am alive, if  
 thou come once to talk with her, I fear thou wilt mar  
 whatsoever I make.  
 BERGETTO You make, uncle? Why, am not I big  
 enough to carry mine own letter, I pray?  
 DONADO Ay, ay, carry a fool's head o' thy own. Why,  
 thou dunce, wouldst thou write a letter and carry it  
 thyself? 10  
 BERGETTO Yes, that I would, and read it to her with  
 my own mouth; for you must think, if she will not  
 believe me myself when she hears me speak, she will  
 not believe another's hand-writing. O, you think I  
 am a blockhead, uncle. No, sir, Poggio knows I have  
 indited a letter myself, so I have.  
 POGGIO Yes truly, sir; I have it in my pocket.  
 DONADO A sweet one, no doubt; pray let's see't.  
 BERGETTO I cannot read my own hand very well,

50 speed: succeed

53 confusion: ruin

60 Hydra: a many-headed beast which grew two more heads  
 for each that was cut off

16 indited: written

Poggio; read it, Poggio. 20  
 DONADO Begin.  
 POGGIO (*reads*) 'Most dainty and honey-sweet mistress,  
 I could call you fair, and lie as fast as any that loves  
 you, but my uncle being the elder man I leave it to  
 him, as more fit for his age and the colour of his  
 beard. I am wise enough to tell you I can bourd  
 where I see occasion; or if you like my uncle's wit  
 better than mine, you shall marry me; if you like  
 mine better than his, I will marry you in spite of your  
 teeth. So commending my best parts to you, I rest—  
 Yours upwards and downwards, or you may choose,  
 Bergetto.' 32  
 BERGETTO Aha, here's stuff, uncle.  
 DONADO Here's stuff indeed to shame us all. Pray  
 whose advice did you take in this learned letter?  
 POGGIO None, upon my word, but mine own.  
 BERGETTO And mine, uncle, believe it, nobody's else;  
 'twas mine own brain, I thank a good wit for't.  
 DONADO Get you home, sir, and look you keep within  
 doors till I return. 40  
 BERGETTO How! That were a jest indeed; I scorn it  
 i'faith.  
 DONADO What! You do not?  
 BERGETTO Judge me, but I do now.  
 POGGIO Indeed, sir, 'tis very unhealthy.  
 DONADO Well, sir, if I hear any of your apish running  
 to motions and fopperies, till I come back, you were  
 as good no; look to't. *Exit* DONADO  
 BERGETTO Poggio, shall's steal to see this horse with  
 the head in's tail? 50  
 POGGIO Ay, but you must take heed of whipping.  
 BERGETTO Dost take me for a child, Poggio? Come,  
 honest Poggio.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene v

*Enter* FRIAR and GIOVANNI

FRIAR Peace. Thou hast told a tale, whose every word  
 Threatens eternal slaughter to the soul.  
 I'm sorry I have heard it; would mine ears  
 Had been one minute deaf, before the hour  
 That thou cam'st to me. O young man cast away,  
 By the religious number of mine order,  
 I day and night have waked my aged eyes,

26 bourd: jest

29–30 in spite of your teeth: despite your opposition

30 parts: see II.i.65n

47 motions: puppet-shows  
 fopperies: follies

49–50 this horse . . . in's tail?: a reference to the fair exhibit  
 mentioned in I.iii.38–41

5 cast away: considered damned

Above my strength, to weep on thy behalf:  
 But Heaven is angry, and be thou resolved,  
 Thou art a man remarked to taste a mischief. 10  
 Look for't; though it come late, it will come sure.  
 GIOVANNI Father, in this you are uncharitable;  
 What I have done I'll prove both fit and good.  
 It is a principle (which you have taught  
 When I was yet your scholar), that the frame  
 And composition of the mind doth follow  
 The frame and composition of the body:  
 So where the body's furniture is beauty,  
 The mind's must needs be virtue; which allowed,  
 Virtue itself is reason but refined, 20  
 And love the quintessence of that. This proves  
 My sister's beauty being rarely fair  
 Is rarely virtuous; chiefly in her love,  
 And chiefly in that love, her love to me.  
 If hers to me, then so is mine to her;  
 Since in like causes are effects alike.  
 FRIAR O ignorance in knowledge. Long ago,  
 How often have I warned thee this before?  
 Indeed, if we were sure there were no deity,  
 Nor Heaven nor hell, then to be led alone 30  
 By nature's light (as were philosophers  
 Of elder times) might instance some defence.  
 But 'tis not so; then, madman, thou wilt find  
 That nature is in Heaven's positions blind.  
 GIOVANNI Your age o'errules you; had you youth like  
 mine,  
 You'd make her love your Heaven, and her divine.  
 FRIAR Nay then, I see th'art too far sold to hell,  
 It lies not in the compass of my prayers  
 To call thee back; yet let me counsel thee:  
 Persuade thy sister to some marriage. 40  
 GIOVANNI Marriage? Why, that's to damn her. That's  
 to prove  
 Her greedy of variety of lust.

FRIAR O fearful! If thou wilt not, give me leave  
 To shrive her, lest she should die unabsolved.

GIOVANNI At your best leisure, father; then she'll tell you

9 resolved: see II.ii.133n

10 remarked: marked out  
 mischief: ruin

14–21 It is a principle . . . of that: Morris compares this to  
 Edmund Spenser's *An Hymne in Honour of Beautie*:  
 For of the soule the bodie forme doth take:  
 For soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

Giovanni is making vague reference to the Neoplatonic  
 notion of the relationship between beauty and truth  
 31–2 (as were . . . elder times): the idea that pre-Christian  
 philosophers would be brought to a state of grace by  
 nature's light

34 That nature . . . positions blind: implies that studying  
 nature teaches us nothing of the truly divine

44 shrive: administer the act of confession

How dearly she doth prize my matchless love.  
 Then you will know what pity 'twere we two  
 Should have been sundered from each other's arms.  
 View well her face, and in that little round  
 You may observe a world of variety:  
 For colour, lips; for sweet perfumes, her breath;  
 For jewels, eyes; for threads of purest gold,  
 Hair; for delicious choice of flowers, cheeks;  
 Wonder in every portion of that throne.  
 Hear her but speak, and you will swear the spheres  
 Make music to the citizens in Heaven.  
 But, father, what is else for pleasure framed,  
 Lest I offend your ears, shall go unnamed.

FRIAR The more I hear, I pity thee the more,  
 That one so excellent should give those parts  
 All to a second death; what I can do  
 Is but to pray: and yet I could advise thee,  
 Wouldst thou be ruled.

GIOVANNI In what?  
 FRIAR Why, leave her yet;  
 The throne of mercy is above your trespass;  
 Yet time is left you both—  
 GIOVANNI To embrace each other,  
 Else let all time be struck quite out of number.  
 She is like me, and I like her, resolved.  
 FRIAR No more! I'll visit her. This grieves me most,  
 Things being thus, a pair of souls are lost.

*Exeunt*

## Act II, scene vi

*Enter* FLORIO, DONADO, ANNABELLA, PUTANA

FLORIO Where's Giovanni?  
 ANNABELLA Newly walked abroad,  
 And, as I heard him say, gone to the friar,  
 His reverend tutor.  
 FLORIO That's a blessèd man,  
 A man made up of holiness; I hope  
 He'll teach him how to gain another world.  
 DONADO Fair gentlewoman, here's a letter sent  
 To you from my young cousin; I dare swear  
 He loves you in his soul: would you could hear  
 Sometimes what I see daily, sighs and tears,  
 As if his breast were prison to his heart.  
 FLORIO Receive it, Annabella.  
 ANNABELLA Alas, good man.  
 DONADO What's that she said?  
 PUTANA And please you, sir, she said, 'Alas, good  
 man.' Truly I do commend him to her every night  
 before her first sleep, because I would have her dream  
 of him, and she hearkens to that most religiously.

54 throne: i.e. Annabella's face

60 parts: see II.i.65n

61 second death: damnation

DONADO Say'st so? God-a-mercy, Putana, there's  
 something for thee, and prithee do what thou canst  
 on his behalf; sha' not be lost labour, take my word  
 for't. 21  
 PUTANA Thank you most heartily, sir; now I have a  
 feeling of your mind, let me alone to work.  
 ANNABELLA Guardian!  
 PUTANA Did you call?  
 ANNABELLA Keep this letter.  
 DONADO Signor Florio, in any case bid her read it  
 instantly.  
 FLORIO Keep it for what? Pray read it me hereright.  
 ANNABELLA I shall, sir. *She reads*  
 DONADO How d'ee find her inclined, signor? 31  
 FLORIO Troth, sir, I know not how; not all so well  
 As I could wish.  
 ANNABELLA Sir, I am bound to rest your cousin's  
 debtor.  
 The jewel I'll return; for if he love,  
 I'll count that love a jewel.  
 DONADO Mark you that?  
 Nay, keep them both, sweet maid.  
 ANNABELLA You must excuse me,  
 Indeed I will not keep it.  
 FLORIO Where's the ring,  
 That which your mother in her will bequeathed,  
 And charged you on her blessing not to give't  
 To any but your husband? Send back that. 40  
 ANNABELLA I have it not.  
 FLORIO Ha, have it not! Where is't?  
 ANNABELLA My brother in the morning took it from  
 me,  
 Said he would wear't today.  
 FLORIO Well, what do you say  
 To young Bergetto's love? Are you content  
 To match with him? Speak.  
 DONADO There's the point indeed.  
 ANNABELLA *(Aside)* What shall I do? I must say  
 something now.  
 FLORIO What say? Why d'ee not speak?  
 ANNABELLA Sir, with your leave,  
 Please you to give me freedom?  
 FLORIO Yes, you have it.  
 ANNABELLA Signor Donado, if your nephew mean 50  
 To raise his better fortunes in his match,  
 The hope of me will hinder such a hope;  
 Sir, if you love him, as I know you do,  
 Find one more worthy of his choice than me.  
 In short, I'm sure I sha' not be his wife.

23 a feeling: an understanding

29 hereright: immediately

49 freedom: a free choice of a husband

51 To raise his better fortunes: to improve his social  
 position



DONADO Why, here's plain dealing; I commend thee  
for't,  
And all the worst I wish thee is, Heaven bless thee!  
Your father yet and I will still be friends,  
Shall we not, Signor Florio?  
FLORIO Yes, why not?  
Look, here your cousin comes. 60

*Enter BERGETTO and POGGIO*

DONADO (*Aside*) O, coxcomb, what doth he make here?  
BERGETTO Where's my uncle, sirs?

DONADO What's the news now?

BERGETTO Save you, uncle, save you. You must not  
think I come for nothing, masters; and how, and how  
is't? What, you have read my letter? Ah, there I—  
tickled you i'faith.

POGGIO But 'twere better you had tickled her in  
another place.

BERGETTO Sirrah sweetheart, I'll tell thee a good jest;  
and riddle what 'tis. 71

ANNABELLA You say you'd tell me.

BERGETTO As I was walking just now in the street, I met  
a swaggering fellow would needs take the wall of me,  
and because he did thrust me, I very valiantly called  
him rogue. He hereupon bade me draw; I told him I  
had more wit than so, but when he saw that I would  
not, he did so maul me with the hilts of his rapier that  
my head sung whilst my feet capered in the kennel.

DONADO (*Aside*) Was ever the like ass seen? 80

ANNABELLA And what did you all this while?

BERGETTO Laugh at him for a gull, till I see the blood  
run about mine ears, and then I could not choose but  
find in my heart to cry; till a fellow with a broad  
beard (they say he is a new-come doctor) called me  
into his house, and gave me a plaster—look you, here  
'tis—and, sir, there was a young wench washed my  
face and hands most excellently, i'faith, I shall love  
her as long as I live for't, did she not, Poggio?

POGGIO Yes, and kissed him too. 90

BERGETTO Why, la now, you think I tell a lie, uncle, I  
warrant.

DONADO Would he that beat thy blood out of thy head  
had beaten some wit into it; for I fear thou never wilt  
have any.

BERGETTO O, uncle, but there was a wench would have  
done a man's heart good to have looked on her—by  
this light she had a face methinks worth twenty of  
you, Mistress Annabella.

67 tickled: pleased

71 riddle: guess

74 take the wall of me: take the cleanest and safest place on  
the pavement, closest to the wall

79 kennel: gutter

82 gull: dupe

DONADO Was ever such a fool born? 100

ANNABELLA I am glad she liked you, sir.

BERGETTO Are you so? By my troth I thank you,  
forsooth.

FLORIO Sure 'twas the doctor's niece, that was last day  
with us here.

BERGETTO 'Twas she, 'twas she.

DONADO How do you know that, simplicity?

BERGETTO Why, does not he say so? If I should have  
said no, I should have given him the lie, uncle, and so  
have deserved a dry beating again; I'll none of that.

FLORIO A very modest well-behaved young maid 111  
As I have seen.

DONADO Is she indeed?

FLORIO Indeed

She is, if I have any judgment.

DONADO Well, sir, now you are free, you need not care  
for sending letters: now you are dismissed, your  
mistress here will none of you.

BERGETTO No. Why, what care I for that? I can have  
wenches enough in Parma for half-a-crown apiece,  
cannot I, Poggio?

POGGIO I'll warrant you, sir. 120

DONADO Signor Florio,

I thank you for your free recourse you gave  
For my admittance; and to you, fair maid,  
That jewel I will give you 'gainst your marriage.  
Come, will you go, sir?

BERGETTO Ay, marry will I. Mistress, farewell,  
mistress. I'll come again tomorrow. Farewell,  
mistress. *Exit* DONADO, BERGETTO, and POGGIO

*Enter GIOVANNI*

FLORIO Son, where have you been? What, alone, alone  
still?

I would not have it so, you must forsake 130  
This over-bookish humour. Well, your sister  
Hath shook the fool off.

GIOVANNI 'Twas no match for her.

FLORIO 'Twas not indeed, I meant it nothing less;  
Soranzo is the man I only like—

Look on him, Annabella. Come, 'tis supper-time.

And it grows late. *Exit* FLORIO

GIOVANNI Whose jewel's that?

ANNABELLA Some sweetheart's.

GIOVANNI So I think.

ANNABELLA A lusty youth,  
Signor Donado, gave it me to wear

101 liked: pleased

109 given him the lie: accused him of lying  
dry: bloodless

118 half-a-crown: the price charged by English prostitutes

124 'gainst: in anticipation of

134 only: specially

Against my marriage.  
 GIOVANNI But you shall not wear it. 140  
 Send it him back again.  
 ANNABELLA What, you are jealous?  
 GIOVANNI That you shall know anon, at better leisure.  
 Welcome, sweet night, the evening crowns the day.  
*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene i

*Enter BERGETTO and POGGIO*

BERGETTO Does my uncle think to make me a baby still? No, Poggio, he shall know I have a sponce now.  
 POGGIO Ay, let him not bob you off like an ape with an apple.  
 BERGETTO 'Sfoot, I will have the wench if he were ten uncles, in despite of his nose, Poggio.  
 POGGIO Hold him to the grindstone and give not a jot of ground. She hath in a manner promised you already.  
 BERGETTO True, Poggio, and her uncle the doctor swore I should marry her. 10  
 POGGIO He swore, I remember.  
 BERGETTO And I will have her, that's more; didst see the codpiece-point she gave me and the box of marmalade?  
 POGGIO Very well; and kissed you, that my chops watered at the sight on't. There's no way but to clap up a marriage in hugger-mugger.  
 BERGETTO I will do't; for I tell thee, Poggio, I begin to grow valiant methinks, and my courage begins to rise.  
 POGGIO Should you be afraid of your uncle? 20  
 BERGETTO Hang him, old doting rascal. No, I say I will have her.  
 POGGIO Lose no time then.  
 BERGETTO I will beget a race of wise men and constables, that shall cart whores at their own charges, and break the duke's peace ere I have done myself.—Come away.

*Exeunt*

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2 sponce: head, brain  
 3 bob: fob  
 5 'Sfoot: 'by God's foot'  
 13 codpiece-point: a lace fastening for a codpiece, the decorative garment which covered but also drew attention to the male genitalia. Elaborate codpieces had become unfashionable by the time the play was first performed  
 16–17 to clap up . . . in hugger-mugger: to arrange a quick and secret marriage. There is an echo here of the speech made by Claudius in *Hamlet* concerning the death of Polonius (IV.v.80)  
 19 courage: bravery, but also sexual desire  
 25 cart whores: prostitutes were paraded in the streets in carts as a punishment  
 charges: expense

### Act III, scene ii

*Enter FLORIO, GIOVANNI, SORANZO, ANNABELLA, PUTANA and VASQUES*

FLORIO My Lord Soranzo, though I must confess The proffers that are made me have been great In marriage of my daughter, yet the hope Of your still rising honours have prevailed Above all other jointures. Here she is; She knows my mind, speak for yourself to her, And hear you, daughter, see you use him nobly; For any private speech I'll give you time. Come, son, and you the rest, let them alone: Agree they as they may.

SORANZO I thank you, sir. 10  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) Sister, be not all woman, think on me.  
 SORANZO Vasques.  
 VASQUES My lord?  
 SORANZO Attend me without.  
*Exeunt omnes, manet SORANZO and ANNABELLA*  
 ANNABELLA Sir, what's your will with me?  
 SORANZO Do you not know What I should tell you?  
 ANNABELLA Yes, you'll say you love me.  
 SORANZO And I'll swear it too; will you believe it?  
 ANNABELLA 'Tis not a point of faith.

*Enter GIOVANNI above*

SORANZO Have you not will to love?  
 ANNABELLA Not you.  
 SORANZO Whom then?  
 ANNABELLA That's as the fates infer.  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) Of those I'm regent now.  
 SORANZO What mean you, sweet?  
 ANNABELLA To live and die a maid.  
 SORANZO O, that's unfit. 21  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) Here's one can say that's but a woman's note.  
 SORANZO Did you but see my heart, then would you swear—  
 ANNABELLA That you were dead.  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) That's true, or somewhat near it.  
 SORANZO See you these true love's tears?  
 ANNABELLA No.

---

5 jointures: proposals of marriage  
 10 Q has 'agree as they may'  
 11 be not all woman: Giovanni refers to a stereotype of women as inconstant  
 15D *manet*: he stays, though in fact both Soranzo and Annabella remain on stage  
 18 point of faith: an article of faith necessary for salvation.  
 Q has "'Tis not point of faith'

GIOVANNI (*Aside*) Now she winks.  
 SORANZO They plead to you for grace.  
 ANNABELLA Yet nothing speak.  
 SORANZO O grant my suit.  
 ANNABELLA What is't?  
 SORANZO To let me live—  
 ANNABELLA Take it.  
 SORANZO —still yours.  
 ANNABELLA That is not mine to give.  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) One such another word would kill  
 his hopes.  
 SORANZO Mistress, to leave those fruitless strifes of wit,  
 Know I have loved you long and loved you truly; 31  
 Not hope of what you have, but what you are,  
 Have drawn me on; then let me not in vain  
 Still feel the rigour of your chaste disdain.  
 I'm sick, and sick to th' heart.  
 ANNABELLA Help, *aqua-vitae*.  
 SORANZO What mean you?  
 ANNABELLA Why, I thought you had been sick.  
 SORANZO Do you mock my love?  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) There, sir, she was too  
 nimble.  
 SORANZO (*Aside*) 'Tis plain, she laughs at me.—These  
 scornful taunts  
 Neither become your modesty or years.  
 ANNABELLA You are no looking glass; or if you were,  
 I'd dress my language by you. 41  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) I'm confirmed.  
 ANNABELLA To put you out of doubt, my lord,  
 methinks  
 Your common sense should make you understand  
 That if I loved you, or desired your love,  
 Some way I should have given you better taste:  
 But since you are a nobleman, and one  
 I would not wish should spend his youth in hopes,  
 Let me advise you here to forbear your suit,  
 And think I wish you well, I tell you this.  
 SORANZO Is't you speak this?  
 ANNABELLA Yes, I myself; yet know—  
 Thus far I give you comfort—if mine eyes 51  
 Could have picked out a man (amongst all those  
 That sued to me) to make a husband of,  
 You should have been that man. Let this suffice;  
 Be noble in your secrecy and wise.  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) Why, now I see she loves me.  
 ANNABELLA One word more:  
 As ever virtue lived within your mind,  
 As ever noble courses were your guide,  
 As ever you would have me know you loved me,  
 Let not my father know hereof by you; 60  
 If I hereafter find that I must marry,

25 winks: turns a blind eye

35 *aqua-vitae*: a reviving spirit, usually brandy

It shall be you or none.  
 SORANZO I take that promise.  
 ANNABELLA O, O, my head.  
 SORANZO What's the matter? Not well?  
 ANNABELLA O, I begin to sicken.  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) Heaven forbid.  
*Exit from above*  
 SORANZO Help, help within there, ho!  
*Enter FLORIO, GIOVANNI and PUTANA*  
 Look to your daughter, Signor Florio.  
 FLORIO Hold her up, she swoons.  
 GIOVANNI Sister, how d'ee?  
 ANNABELLA Sick—brother, are you there? 70  
 FLORIO Convey her to her bed instantly, whilst I send  
 for a physician; quickly, I say.  
 PUTANA Alas, poor child! *Exeunt, manet SORANZO*

*Enter VASQUES*

VASQUES My lord.  
 SORANZO O Vasques, now I doubly am undone  
 Both in my present and my future hopes.  
 She plainly told me that she could not love,  
 And thereupon soon sickened, and I fear  
 Her life's in danger. 79  
 VASQUES (*Aside*) By'r lady, sir, and so is yours, if you  
 knew all.—'Las, sir, I am sorry for that; may be 'tis  
 but the maid's sickness, an overflux of youth, and  
 then, sir, there is no such present remedy as present  
 marriage. But hath she given you an absolute denial?  
 SORANZO She hath and she hath not; I'm full of grief,  
 But what she said I'll tell thee as we go.

*Exeunt***Act III, scene iii***Enter GIOVANNI and PUTANA*

PUTANA O sir, we are all undone, quite undone, utterly  
 undone, and shamed forever; your sister, O your  
 sister.  
 GIOVANNI What of her? For Heaven's sake, speak; how  
 does she?  
 PUTANA O that ever I was born to see this day.  
 GIOVANNI She is not dead, ha? Is she?  
 PUTANA Dead? No, she is quick; 'tis worse, she is with  
 child. You know what you have done; Heaven forgive  
 'ee. 'Tis too late to repent now, Heaven help us.  
 GIOVANNI With child? How dost thou know't? 10  
 PUTANA How do I know't? Am I at these years  
 ignorant what the meanings of qualms and water-

82 maid's sickness: greensickness, chlorosis, a form of  
 anaemia associated with female puberty

overflux: overflow, surplus

8 quick: alive, but also pregnant

pangs be? Of changing of colours, queasiness of stomachs, pukings, and another thing that I could name? Do not, for her and your credit's sake, spend the time in asking how, and which way, 'tis so; she is quick, upon my word: if you let a physician see her water y'are undone.

GIOVANNI But in what case is she? **19**

PUTANA Prettily amended; 'twas but a fit which I soon espied, and she must look for often henceforward.

GIOVANNI Commend me to her, bid her take no care;

Let not the doctor visit her, I charge you,

Make some excuse, till I return. O me!

I have a world of business in my head.

Do not discomfort her.—

How does this news perplex me! If my father

Come to her, tell him she's recovered well,

Say 'twas but some ill diet; d'ee hear, woman?

Look you to't. **30**

PUTANA I will, sir.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene iv

*Enter FLORIO and RICHARDETTO*

FLORIO And how d'ee find her, sir?

RICHARDETTO Indifferent well;

I see no danger, scarce perceive she's sick,

But that she told me she had lately eaten

Melons, and, as she thought, those disagreed

With her young stomach.

FLORIO Did you give her aught?

RICHARDETTO An easy surfeit-water, nothing else.

You need not doubt her health; I rather think

Her sickness is a fulness of her blood—

You understand me?

FLORIO I do; you counsel well,

And once, within these few days, will so order't **10**

She shall be married ere she know the time.

RICHARDETTO Yet let not haste, sir, make unworthy choice;

That were dishonour.

FLORIO Master Doctor, no;

I will not do so neither; in plain words,

My Lord Soranzo is the man I mean.

RICHARDETTO A noble and a virtuous gentleman.

FLORIO As any is in Parma. Not far hence

Dwells Father Bonaventure, a grave friar,

Once tutor to my son; now at his cell

I'll have 'em married.

RICHARDETTO You have plotted wisely. **20**

FLORIO I'll send one straight to speak with him

tonight.

RICHARDETTO Soranzo's wise, he will delay no time.

FLORIO It shall be so.

*Enter FRIAR and GIOVANNI*

FRIAR Good peace be here and love.

FLORIO Welcome, religious friar; you are one

That still brings blessing to the place you come to.

GIOVANNI Sir, with what speed I could, I did my best

To draw this holy man from forth his cell

To visit my sick sister, that with words

Of ghostly comfort, in this time of need,

He might absolve her, whether she live or die. **30**

FLORIO 'Twas well done, Giovanni; thou herein

Hast showed a Christian's care, a brother's love.

Come, father, I'll conduct you to her chamber,

And one thing would entreat you.

FRIAR Say on, sir.

FLORIO I have a father's dear impression,

And wish, before I fall into my grave,

That I might see her married, as 'tis fit;

A word from you, grave man, will win her more

Than all our best persuasions.

FRIAR Gentle sir,

All this I'll say, that Heaven may prosper her. **40**

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene v

*Enter GRIMALDI*

GRIMALDI Now if the doctor keep his word, Soranzo,

Twenty to one you miss your bride; I know

'Tis an unnoble act, and not becomes

A soldier's valour, but in terms of love,

Where merit cannot sway, policy must.

I am resolved; if this physician

Play not on both hands, then Soranzo falls.

*Enter RICHARDETTO*

12-13 water-pangs: compulsion to urinate

13-14 and another . . . could name: cessation of menstruation

14 credit's: good name's

19 case: state

20 Prettily amended: recovered

22 take no care: not worry

1 Indifferent: fairly

6 surfeit-water: a cure for indigestion

8 a fulness of her blood: a case of sexual frustration

10 once: at some time

25 still: always

29 ghostly: spiritual

35 dear impression: the meaning is not clear although some modern editors note that Florio means to suggest his loving feelings as a father

4 terms: circumstances

5 policy: cunning

7 Play not . . . both hands: is not working for both sides

RICHARDETTO You are come as I could wish; this very night  
Soranzo, 'tis ordained, must be affied  
To Annabella, and, for aught I know, 10  
Married.

GRIMALDI How!

RICHARDETTO Yet your patience:  
The place, 'tis Friar Bonaventure's cell.  
Now I would wish you to bestow this night  
In watching thereabouts; 'tis but a night:  
If you miss now, tomorrow I'll know all.

GRIMALDI Have you the poison?

RICHARDETTO Here 'tis in this box.  
Doubt nothing, this will do't; in any case,  
As you respect your life, be quick and sure.

GRIMALDI I'll speed him.

RICHARDETTO Do. Away; for 'tis not safe  
You should be seen much here — Ever my love. 20

GRIMALDI And mine to you. *Exit GRIMALDI*

RICHARDETTO So. If this hit, I'll laugh and hug revenge;  
And they that now dream of a wedding-feast  
May chance to mourn the lusty bridegroom's ruin.  
But to my other business.—Niece Philotis!

*Enter PHILOTIS*

PHILOTIS Uncle?

RICHARDETTO My lovely niece,  
You have bethought 'ee?

PHILOTIS Yes, and, as you counselled  
Fashioned my heart to love him; but he swears 30  
He will tonight be married, for he fears  
His uncle else, if he should know the drift,  
Will hinder all, and call his coz to shrift.

RICHARDETTO Tonight? Why, best of all; but let me see,  
Ay—ha—yes—so it shall be; in disguise  
We'll early to the friar's, I have thought on't.

*Enter BERGETTO and POGGIO*

PHILOTIS Uncle, he comes.

RICHARDETTO Welcome, my worthy coz.

BERGETTO Lass, pretty lass, come buss, lass! Aha,  
Poggio! *Kisses her*

POGGIO There's hope of this yet.

RICHARDETTO You shall have time enough; withdraw a  
little,

We must confer at large. 40

BERGETTO Have you not sweetmeats or dainty devices  
for me?

9 affied: betrothed

19 speed: dispatch, kill

22 hit: succeed

31 drift: plan

32 his coz to shrift: summon his nephew (cousin) to confession

37 buss: kiss

40 at large: at length

PHILOTIS You shall have enough, sweetheart.

BERGETTO Sweetheart! Mark that, Poggio. By my troth,  
I cannot choose but kiss thee once more for that word  
'sweetheart'. Poggio, I have a monstrous swelling  
about my stomach, whatsoever the matter be.

POGGIO You shall have physic for't, sir.

RICHARDETTO Time runs apace.

BERGETTO Time's a blockhead.

RICHARDETTO Be ruled; when we have done what's fit  
to do, 50

Then you may kiss your fill, and bed her too.

*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene vi

*Enter the FRIAR in his study sitting in a chair, ANNABELLA kneeling and whispering to him; a table before them and wax-lights; she weeps and wrings her hands*

FRIAR I am glad to see this penance; for, believe me,  
You have unripped a soul so foul and guilty  
As I must tell you true, I marvel how  
The earth hath borne you up; but weep, weep on,  
These tears may do you good; weep faster yet,  
Whiles I do read a lecture.

ANNABELLA Wretched creature!

FRIAR Ay, you are wretched, miserably wretched,  
Almost condemned alive. There is a place—  
List, daughter—in a black and hollow vault, 10  
Where day is never seen; there shines no sun,  
But flaming horror of consuming fires,  
A lightless sulphur, choked with smoky fogs  
Of an infected darkness; in this place  
Dwell many thousand thousand sundry sorts  
Of never-dying deaths—there damned souls  
Roar without pity; there are gluttons fed  
With toads and adders; there is burning oil  
Poured down the drunkard's throat, the usurer  
Is forced to sup whole draughts of molten gold;  
There is the murderer forever stabbed, 20  
Yet can he never die; there lies the wanton  
On racks of burning steel, whiles in his soul  
He feels the torment of his raging lust.

47 physic: see II.i.56n

SD *in his study*: critics have disagreed over the location of the scene since the Friar has previously been directed to Annabella's 'chamber' but Richardetto and Grimaldi have discussed a betrothal in the Friar's cell. It is certainly thought that the stage direction is Ford's. An alternative interpretation is that the phrase 'in his study' refers to the way that the Friar is observed wrapped up in his contemplation of damnation

2 unripped: exposed

6 I do read a lecture: deliver a cautionary reprimand

9 List: listen

ANNABELLA Mercy, O mercy!  
 FRIAR There stands these  
 wretched things  
 Who have dreamed out whole years in lawless sheets  
 And secret incests, cursing one another.  
 Then you will wish each kiss your brother gave  
 Had been a dagger's point; then you shall hear  
 How he will cry, 'O would my wicked sister  
 Had first been damned, when she did yield to lust!—  
 But soft, methinks I see repentance work 31  
 New motions in your heart; say, how is't with you?  
 ANNABELLA Is there no way left to redeem my miseries?  
 FRIAR There is, despair not; Heaven is merciful,  
 And offers grace even now. 'Tis thus agreed,  
 First, for your honour's safety, that you marry  
 The Lord Soranzo; next, to save your soul,  
 Leave off this life, and henceforth live to him.  
 ANNABELLA Ay me.  
 FRIAR Sigh not; I know the baits of sin  
 Are hard to leave. O, 'tis a death to do't. 40  
 Remember what must come. Are you content?  
 ANNABELLA I am.  
 FRIAR I like it well; we'll take the time.  
 Who's near us there?

*Enter FLORIO and GIOVANNI*

FLORIO Did you call, father?  
 FRIAR Is Lord Soranzo come?  
 FLORIO He stays below.  
 FRIAR Have you acquainted him at full?  
 FLORIO I have,  
 And he is overjoyed.  
 FRIAR And so are we.  
 Bid him come near.  
 GIOVANNI (*Aside*) My sister weeping, ha?  
 I fear this friar's falsehood.—I will call him. *Exit*  
 FLORIO Daughter, are you resolved?  
 ANNABELLA Father, I am. 50

*Enter GIOVANNI, SORANZO, and VASQUES*

FLORIO My Lord Soranzo, here  
 Give me your hand; for that I give you this.  
 SORANZO Lady, say you so too?  
 ANNABELLA I do, and vow  
 To live with you and yours.  
 FRIAR Timely resolved:  
 My blessing rest on both; more to be done,  
 You may perform it on the morning sun. *Exeunt*

## Act III, scene vii

*Enter GRIMALDI with his rapier drawn and a dark lantern*

GRIMALDI 'Tis early night as yet, and yet too soon  
 To finish such a work; here I will lie  
 To listen who comes next. *He lies down*

*Enter BERGETTO and PHILOTIS disguised, and after RICHARDETTO and POGGIO*

BERGETTO We are almost at the place, I hope,  
 sweetheart.  
 GRIMALDI (*Aside*) I hear them near, and heard one say  
 'sweetheart'.  
 'Tis he; now guide my hand, some angry justice,  
 Home to his bosom. Now have at you, sir!  
*Strikes BERGETTO and exit*

BERGETTO O help, help! Here's a stitch fallen in my  
 guts. O for a flesh-tailor quickly!—Poggio!  
 PHILOTIS What ails my love? 10

BERGETTO I am sure I cannot piss forward and  
 backward, and yet I am wet before and behind.—  
 Lights, lights! Ho, lights!

PHILOTIS Alas, some villain here has slain my love.  
 RICHARDETTO O Heaven forbid it.—Raise up the next  
 neighbours

Instantly, Poggio, and bring lights. *Exit POGGIO*  
 How is't, Bergetto? Slain? It cannot be;  
 Are you sure y'are hurt?

BERGETTO O my belly seethes like a porridge-pot;  
 some cold water, I shall boil over else; my whole body  
 is in a sweat, that you may wring my shirt; feel  
 here—Why, Poggio! 22

*Enter POGGIO with OFFICERS and lights and halberts*

POGGIO Here. Alas, how do you?  
 RICHARDETTO Give me a light. What's here? All  
 blood! O sirs,

Signor Donado's nephew now is slain.  
 Follow the murderer with all thy haste  
 Up to the city, he cannot be far hence;  
 Follow, I beseech you.

OFFICERS Follow, follow, follow. *Exeunt OFFICERS*  
 RICHARDETTO Tear off thy linen, coz, to stop his  
 wounds. 30

Be of good comfort, man.  
 BERGETTO Is all this mine own blood? Nay then, good  
 night with me. Poggio, commend me to my uncle,  
 dost hear? Bid him for my sake make much of this

42 we'll take the time: take the opportunity

44 stays: waits

51–6 My Lord . . . morning sun: the Friar joins Annabella and Soranzo in a betrothal which would be followed by the formal act of marriage at a later date

SD *dark lantern*: a lantern with a sliding shutter which could conceal the light

9 *flesh-tailor*: surgeon

SD *halberts*: spears with axe handles

26 with all thy haste: Q has 'with all the haste'

wench. O!—I am going the wrong way sure, my belly aches so.—O, farewell, Poggio! O! — O! *Dies*  
 PHILOTIS O, he is dead.  
 POGGIO How! Dead!  
 RICHARDETTO He's dead indeed.  
 'Tis now too late to weep; let's have him home,  
 And with what speed we may, find out the murderer.  
 POGGIO O my master, my master, my master! **40**  
*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene viii

*Entr* VASQUES and HIPPOLITA

HIPPOLITA Betrothed?  
 VASQUES I saw it.  
 HIPPOLITA And when's the marriage-day?  
 VASQUES Some two days hence.  
 HIPPOLITA Two days? Why, man, I would but wish two hours  
 To send him to his last, and lasting sleep.  
 And, Vasques, thou shalt see I'll do it bravely.  
 VASQUES I do not doubt your wisdom, nor, I trust, you my secrecy;  
 I am infinitely yours.  
 HIPPOLITA I will be thine in spite of my disgrace. **10**  
 So soon? O, wicked man, I durst be sworn,  
 He'd laugh to see me weep.  
 VASQUES And that's a villainous fault in him.  
 HIPPOLITA No, let him laugh, I'm armed in my resolves;  
 Be thou still true.  
 VASQUES I should get little by treachery against so hopeful a preferment as I am like to climb to.  
 HIPPOLITA Even to my bosom, Vasques. Let my youth Revel in these new pleasures; if we thrive,  
 He now hath but a pair of days to live. **20**  
*Exeunt*

### Act III, scene ix

*Enter* FLORIO, DONADO, RICHARDETTO, POGGIO and Officers

FLORIO 'Tis bootless now to show yourself a child, Signor Donado; what is done, is done.  
 Spend not the time in tears, but seek for justice.  
 RICHARDETTO I must confess, somewhat I was in fault  
 That had not first acquainted you what love  
 Passed 'twixt him and my niece; but, as I live,  
 His fortune grieves me as it were mine own.  
 DONADO Alas, poor creature, he meant no man harm,

7 bravely: handsomely

16 against so hopeful: in exchange for so promising

18 my youth: Soranzo

1 bootless: pointless

That I am sure of.  
 FLORIO I believe that too.  
 But stay, my masters, are you sure you saw **10**  
 The murderer pass here?  
 OFFICER And it please you, sir, we are sure we saw a ruffian, with a naked weapon in his hand all bloody, get into my lord Cardinal's grace's gate, that we are sure of; but for fear of his grace, bless us, we durst go no further.  
 DONADO Know you what manner of man he was?  
 OFFICER Yes, sure, I know the man; they say 'a is a soldier; he that loved your daughter, sir, an't please ye; 'twas he for certain. **20**  
 FLORIO Grimaldi, on my life.  
 OFFICER Ay, ay, the same.  
 RICHARDETTO The Cardinal is noble; he no doubt Will give true justice.  
 DONADO Knock someone at the gate.  
 POGGIO I'll knock, sir. *POGGIO knocks*  
 SERVANT (*within*) What would 'ee?  
 FLORIO We require speech with the lord Cardinal  
 About some present business; pray inform  
 His grace that we are here.

*Enter* CARDINAL and GRIMALDI

CARDINAL Why, how now, friends! What saucy mates are you **30**  
 That know nor duty nor civility?  
 Are we a person fit to be your host,  
 Or is our house become your common inn,  
 To beat our doors at pleasure? What such haste  
 Is yours as that it cannot wait fit times?  
 Are you the masters of this commonwealth,  
 And know no more discretion? O, your news  
 Is here before you; you have lost a nephew,  
 Donado, last night by Grimaldi slain:  
 Is that your business? Well, sir, we have knowledge **40**  
 on't.  
 Let that suffice.  
 GRIMALDI In presence of your grace,  
 In thought I never meant Bergetto harm.  
 But Florio, you can tell, with how much scorn  
 Soranzo, backed with his confederates,  
 Hath often wronged me; I, to be revenged,  
 For that I could not win him else to fight,  
 Had thought by way of ambush to have killed him,  
 But was unluckily therein mistook;  
 Else he had felt what late Bergetto did:  
 And though my fault to him were merely chance, **50**  
 Yet humbly I submit me to your grace,

12 And: if

18 'a: he

28 present: urgent

50 chance: by accident

To do with me as you please.  
 CARDINAL Rise up, Grimaldi.  
 You citizens of Parma, if you seek  
 For justice, know, as nuncio from the Pope,  
 For this offence I here receive Grimaldi  
 Into his holiness's protection.  
 He is no common man, but nobly born;  
 Of princes' blood, though you, Sir Florio,  
 Thought him too mean a husband for your daughter.  
 If more you seek for, you must go to Rome, 60  
 For he shall thither; learn more wit, for shame.  
 Bury your dead.—Away, Grimaldi; leave 'em.

*Exeunt CARDINAL and GRIMALDI*

DONADO Is this a churchman's voice? Dwells justice  
 here?  
 FLORIO Justice is fled to Heaven and comes no nearer.  
 Soranzo. Was't for him? O impudence.  
 Had he the face to speak it, and not blush?  
 Come, come, Donado, there's no help in this,  
 When cardinals think murder's not amiss.  
 Great men may do their wills, we must obey;  
 But Heaven will judge them for't another day. 70

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene i

*A Banquet. Hautboys. Enter the FRIAR, GIOVANNI,  
 ANNABELLA, PHILOTIS, SORANZO, DONADO, FLORIO,  
 RICHARDETTO, PUTANA, and VASQUES*

FRIAR These holy rites performed, now take your times  
 To spend the remnant of the day in feast;  
 Such fit repasts are pleasing to the saints,  
 Who are your guests, though not with mortal eyes  
 To be beheld.—Long prosper in this day,  
 You happy couple, to each other's joy.  
 SORANZO Father, your prayer is heard; the hand of  
 goodness  
 Hath been a shield for me against my death;  
 And, more to bless me, hath enriched my life  
 With this most precious jewel; such a prize 10  
 As earth hath not another like to this.  
 Cheer up, my love, and gentlemen, my friends,  
 Rejoice with me in mirth; this day we'll crown  
 With lusty cups to Annabella's health.

GIOVANNI (*Aside*) O torture. Were the marriage yet  
 undone,  
 Ere I'd endure this sight, to see my love

59 mean: lowly

61 wit: sense

64 Justice is . . . no nearer: when the Golden Age came to  
 an end the goddess of justice, Astraea, fled to the heavens  
 and became the constellation Virgo

SD *Hautboys*: oboes

Clipped by another, I would dare confusion,  
 And stand the horror of ten thousand deaths.  
 VASQUES Are you not well, sir?  
 GIOVANNI Prithee, fellow, wait;  
 I need not thy officious diligence. 20  
 FLORIO Signor Donado, come, you must forget  
 Your late mishaps, and drown your cares in wine.  
 SORANZO Vasques.  
 VASQUES My lord?  
 SORANZO Reach me that weighty bowl.  
 Here, brother Giovanni, here's to you;  
 Your turn comes next, though now a bachelor.  
 Here's to your sister's happiness and mine.  
 GIOVANNI I cannot drink.  
 SORANZO What?  
 GIOVANNI 'Twill indeed offend me.  
 ANNABELLA Pray do not urge him, if he be not willing.  
*Hautboys*  
 FLORIO How now, what noise is this? 29  
 VASQUES O, sir, I had forgot to tell you; certain young  
 maidens of Parma, in honour to Madam Annabella's  
 marriage, have sent their loves to her in a masque, for  
 which they humbly crave your patience and silence.  
 SORANZO We are much bound to them, so much the  
 more  
 As it comes unexpected; guide them in.

*Enter HIPPOLITA and LADIES in masks and white robes,  
 with garlands of willows. Music and a dance*

SORANZO Thanks, lovely virgins; now might we but know  
 To whom we have been beholding for this love,  
 We shall acknowledge it.

HIPPOLITA Yes, you shall know; (*Unmasks*)  
 What think you now?

OMNES Hippolita!

HIPPOLITA 'Tis she,  
 Be not amazed; nor blush, young lovely bride, 40  
 I come not to defraud you of your man.  
 'Tis now no time to reckon up the talk  
 What Parma long hath rumoured of us both:  
 Let rash report run on; the breath that vents it  
 Will, like a bubble, break itself at last.  
 But now to you, sweet creature: lend's your hand;  
 Perhaps it hath been said that I would claim

17 Clipped: embraced

19 wait: wait on the guests

24 brother: as in brother-in-law

27 offend: displease, but also, cause illness

SD *Hautboys*: after l. 35 in Q

29 noise: music

34 bound: obliged

SD *willows*: a traditional symbol of disappointed love

37 love: act of kindness

44 rash report: gossip



Some interest in Soranzo, now your lord.  
 What I have right to do, his soul knows best;  
 But in my duty to your noble worth,  
 Sweet Annabella, and my care of you,  
 Here take, Soranzo, take this hand from me:  
 I'll once more join what by the holy church  
 Is finished and allowed. Have I done well?  
 SORANZO You have too much engaged us.  
 HIPPOLITA One thing more.  
 That you may know my single charity,  
 Freely I here remit all interest  
 I e'er could claim, and give you back your vows;  
 And to confirm't, reach me a cup of wine.  
 My Lord Soranzo, in this draught I drink  
 Long rest t'ee.—Look to it, Vasques.  
 VASQUES Fear nothing.  
*He gives her a poisoned cup: she drinks*  
 SORANZO Hippolita, I thank you, and will pledge  
 This happy union as another life;  
 Wine, there!  
 VASQUES You shall have none, neither shall you pledge  
 her.  
 HIPPOLITA How!  
 VASQUES Know now, Mistress She-Devil, your own  
 mischievous treachery hath killed you; I must not  
 marry you.  
 HIPPOLITA Villain.  
 OMNES What's the matter?  
 VASQUES Foolish woman, thou art now like a firebrand  
 that hath kindled others and burnt thyself; *tropo*  
*sperar, inganna*, thy vain hope hath deceived thee,  
 thou art but dead; if thou hast any grace, pray.  
 HIPPOLITA Monster.  
 VASQUES Die in charity, for shame. This thing of  
 malice, this woman, had privately corrupted me with  
 promise of marriage, under this politic reconciliation,  
 to poison my lord, whiles she might laugh at his  
 confusion on his marriage day. I promised her fair,  
 but I knew what my reward should have been, and  
 would willingly have spared her life, but that I was  
 acquainted with the danger of her disposition, and  
 now have fitted her a just payment in her own coin.  
 There she is, she hath yet—and end thy days in

54 allowed: approved

55 engaged: placed under obligation

56 single charity: sincere love

74-5 *tropo sperar, inganna*: too much hope deceives. Q has  
*niganna* but this is a compositor's error78 charity: Christian love, ironically recalling Hippolita's  
remark at l. 56

80 this politic reconciliation: this clever arrangement

87 yet—and: there is a gap in the line here possibly owing to  
the illegibility of the manuscript from which the  
compositor worked. Morris suggests a phrase such as 'a  
moment to live. Pray then'

peace, vile woman; as for life there's no hope, think  
 not on't. 89

OMNES Wonderful justice!  
 RICHARDETTO Heaven, thou art righteous.  
 HIPPOLITA O, 'tis true,  
 I feel my minute coming. Had that slave  
 Kept promise (O, my torment) thou this hour  
 Had'st died, Soranzo—heat above hell fire—  
 Yet ere I pass away—cruel, cruel flames -  
 Take here my curse amongst you: may thy bed  
 Of marriage be a rack unto thy heart,  
 Burn blood and boil in vengeance—O, my heart,  
 My flame's intolerable—May'st thou live  
 To father bastards, may her womb bring forth  
 Monsters, and die together in your sins,  
 Hated, scorned, and unpitied—O!—O!— Dies  
 FLORIO Was e'er so vile a creature?  
 RICHARDETTO Here's the end  
 Of lust and pride.  
 ANNABELLA It is a fearful sight.  
 SORANZO Vasques, I know thee now a trusty servant,  
 And never will forget thee.—Come, my love,  
 We'll home, and thank the Heavens for this escape.  
 Father and friends, we must break up this mirth;  
 It is too sad a feast.  
 DONADO Bear hence the body.  
 FRIAR Here's an ominous change;  
 Mark this, my Giovanni, and take heed. 110  
 I fear the event; that marriage seldom's good,  
 Where the bride-banquet so begins in blood.

*Exeunt*

## Act IV, scene ii

*Enter RICHARDETTO and PHILOTIS*

RICHARDETTO My wretched wife, more wretched in  
 her shame  
 Than in her wrongs to me, hath paid too soon  
 The forfeit of her modesty and life;  
 And I am sure, my niece, though vengeance hover,  
 Keeping aloof yet from Soranzo's fall,  
 Yet he will fall, and sink with his own weight.  
 I need not now—my heart persuades me so—  
 To further his confusion; there is One  
 Above begins to work, for, as I hear,  
 Debates already 'twixt his wife and him  
 Thicken and run to head; she, as 'tis said,  
 Slightens his love, and he abandons hers. 10

92 my minute: my death

112 event: outcome

10 Debates: arguments

11 Thicken and run to head: come to a head ready to burst,  
like a boil

12 Slightens: disdains

Much talk I hear. Since things go thus, my niece,  
 In tender love and pity of your youth,  
 My counsel is, that you should free your years  
 From hazard of these woes by flying hence  
 To fair Cremona, there to vow your soul  
 In holiness a holy votaress:  
 Leave me to see the end of these extremes.  
 All human worldly courses are uneven; 20  
 No life is blessed but the way to Heaven.  
 PHILOTIS Uncle, shall I resolve to be a nun?  
 RICARDETTO Ay, gentle niece, and in your hourly  
 prayers  
 Remember me, your poor unhappy uncle.  
 Hie to Cremona now, as fortune leads,  
 Your home your cloister, your best friends your  
 beads.  
 Your chaste and single life shall crown your birth;  
 Who dies a virgin lives a saint on earth.  
 PHILOTIS Then farewell, world, and worldly thoughts,  
 adieu.  
 Welcome, chaste vows; myself I yield to you. 30

*Exeunt*

### Act IV, scene iii

*Enter SORANZO unbraced, and ANNABELLA dragged in*

SORANZO Come, strumpet, famous whore! Were every  
 drop  
 Of blood that runs in thy adulterous veins  
 A life, this sword, dost see't, should in one blow  
 Confound them all. Harlot, rare, notable harlot,  
 That with thy brazen face maintain'st thy sin,  
 Was there no man in Parma to be bawd  
 To your loose cunning whoredom else but I?  
 Must your hot itch and pleurisy of lust,  
 The heyday of your luxury, be fed  
 Up to a surfeit, and could none but I  
 Be picked out to be cloak to your close tricks,  
 Your belly-sports? Now I must be the dad  
 To all that gallimaufry that's stuffed  
 In thy corrupted bastard-bearing womb,  
 Say, must I?  
 ANNABELLA Beastly man! Why, 'tis thy fate.

17 Cremona: a city known for its cathedral. Parma and Cremona are traditionally 'rival' cities

18 votaress: a nun

26 beads: a rosary

SD *unbraced*: with part of his clothing undone

1 famous: notorious

4 Confound: destroy

5 maintains't: persist in or defend

8 pleurisy: excess

9 heyday of your luxury: height of your lust

11 close: secret

13 gallimaufry: mixture

I sued not to thee; for, but that I thought  
 Your over-loving lordship would have run  
 Mad on denial, had ye lent me time,  
 I would have told 'ee in what case I was.  
 But you would needs be doing.  
 SORANZO Whore of whores! 20  
 Dar'st thou tell me this?  
 ANNABELLA O yes, why not?  
 You were deceived in me; 'twas not for love  
 I chose you, but for honour; yet know this,  
 Would you be patient yet, and hide your shame,  
 I'd see whether I could love you.  
 SORANZO Excellent quean!  
 Why, art thou not with child?  
 ANNABELLA What needs all this  
 When 'tis superfluous? I confess I am.  
 SORANZO Tell me by whom.  
 ANNABELLA Soft, sir, 'twas not in my bargain.  
 Yet somewhat, sir, to stay your longing stomach,  
 I am content t'acquaint you with; the man, 30  
 The more than man, that got this sprightly boy.  
 For 'tis a boy, and that for glory, sir,  
 Your heir shall be a son.  
 SORANZO Damnable monster!  
 ANNABELLA Nay, and you will not hear. I'll speak no  
 more.  
 SORANZO Yes, speak, and speak thy last.  
 ANNABELLA A match, a match!  
 This noble creature was in every part  
 So angel-like, so glorious, that a woman  
 Who had not been but human, as was I,  
 Would have kneeled to him, and have begged for  
 love.  
 You! Why, you are not worthy once to name 40  
 His name without true worship, or, indeed,  
 Unless you kneeled, to hear another name him.  
 SORANZO What was he called?  
 ANNABELLA We are not come to that.  
 Let it suffice that you shall have the glory  
 To father what so brave a father got.  
 In brief, had not this chance fallen out as't doth,  
 I never had been troubled with a thought  
 That you had been a creature; but for marriage,  
 I scarce dream yet of that.  
 SORANZO Tell me his name.  
 ANNABELLA Alas, alas, there's all. 50

20 doing: sexually active  
 25 quean: prostitute  
 29 stay: satisfy  
 32 and that for glory: Q has 'that for' and some editors prefer 'for your glory' as a substitute for what is clearly an inadequate line  
 35 A match, a match!: agreed, a bargain!  
 45 brave: splendid  
 48 had been a creature: had existed

Will you believe?  
 SORANZO What?  
 ANNABELLA You shall never know.  
 SORANZO How!  
 ANNABELLA Never; if you do, let me be cursed.  
 SORANZO Not know it, strumpet? I'll rip up thy heart,  
 And find it there.  
 ANNABELLA Do, do.  
 SORANZO And with my teeth  
 Tear the prodigious lecher joint by joint.  
 ANNABELLA Ha, ha, ha, the man's merry!  
 SORANZO Dost thou laugh?  
 Come, whore, tell me your lover, or, by truth,  
 I'll hew thy flesh to shreds; who is't?  
 ANNABELLA (*sings*)  
*Che morte più dolce che morire per amore?*  
 SORANZO Thus will I pull thy hair, and thus I'll drag 60  
 Thy lust-belepered body through the dust.  
 Yet tell his name.  
 ANNABELLA (*sings*)  
*Morendo in gratia Dei, morirei senza dolore.*  
 SORANZO Dost thou triumph? The treasure of the earth  
 Shall not redeem thee; were there kneeling kings  
 Did beg thy life, or angels did come down  
 To plead in tears, yet should not all prevail  
 Against my rage. Dost thou not tremble yet?  
 ANNABELLA At what? To die? No, be a gallant  
 hangman.  
 I dare thee to the worst: strike, and strike home; 70  
 I leave revenge behind, and thou shalt feel't.  
 SORANZO Yet tell me ere thou diest, and tell me truly,  
 Knows thy old father this?  
 ANNABELLA No, by my life.  
 SORANZO Wilt thou confess, and I will spare thy life?  
 ANNABELLA My life? I will not buy my life so dear.  
 SORANZO I will not slack my vengeance.

*Enter* VASQUES

VASQUES What d'ee mean, sir?  
 SORANZO Forbear, Vasques; such a damned whore  
 Deserves no pity. 79  
 VASQUES Now the gods forfend! And would you be her  
 executioner, and kill her in your rage too? O, 'twere

55 prodigious: monstrous

59 *Che morte . . . per amore?*: what death is sweeter than to die for love?

63 *Morendo in . . . senza dolore*: dying in the grace of God, I should die without sorrow. Although apparently quotations, no editor has indentified Annabella's Italian lines which have been amended in the light of Q's numerous errors. The lines sound like proverbs

69 hangman: a generic term for an executioner

74 confess: admit your lover's name

76 slack: reduce

80 forfend: forbid

most unmanlike. She is your wife: what faults hath been done by her before she married you, were not against you; alas, poor lady, what hath she committed which any lady in Italy in the like case would not? Sir, you must be ruled by your reason and not by your fury; that were unhuman and beastly.

SORANZO She shall not live. 88

VASQUES Come, she must. You would have her confess the author of her present misfortunes, I warrant 'ee; 'tis an unconscionable demand, and she should lose the estimation that I, for my part, hold of her worth, if she had done it. Why, sir, you ought not of all men living to know it. Good sir, be reconciled; alas, good gentlewoman.

ANNABELLA Pish, do not beg for me; I prize my life As nothing; if the man will needs be mad  
 Why, let him take it.

SORANZO Vasques, hear'st thou this? 98

VASQUES Yes, and commend her for it; in this she shows the nobleness of a gallant spirit, and beshrew my heart, but it becomes her rarely. (*Aside*) Sir, in any case smother your revenge; leave the scenting-out your wrongs to me; be ruled, as you respect your honour, or you mar all. (*Aloud*) Sir, if ever my service were of any credit with you, be not so violent in your distractions. You are married now; what a triumph might the report of this give to other neglected suitors. 'Tis as manlike to bear extremities as godlike to forgive. 109

SORANZO O Vasques, Vasques, in this piece of flesh,  
 This faithless face of hers, had I laid up  
 The treasure of my heart. Hadst thou been virtuous,  
 Fair, wicked woman, not the matchless joys  
 Of life itself had made me wish to live  
 With any saint but thee; deceitful creature  
 How hast thou mocked my hopes, and in the shame  
 Of thy lewd womb even buried me alive.  
 I did too dearly love thee.

VASQUES (*Aside*) This is well; follow this temper with some passion. Be brief and moving; 'tis for the purpose. 121

SORANZO Be witness to my words thy soul and thoughts,  
 And tell me, didst not think that in my heart  
 I did too superstitiously adore thee?

ANNABELLA I must confess I know you loved me well.

SORANZO And wouldst thou use me thus? O,  
 Annabella

90 author: Q has 'authors'

100 beshrew: curse

101-2 in any case: by any means

105 credit: esteem

108 extremities: hardships

119 temper: attitude

124 superstitiously: idolatrously

- Be thou assured, whatsoe'er the villain was  
That thus hath tempted thee to this disgrace,  
Well he might lust, but never loved like me.  
He doted on the picture that hung out  
Upon thy cheeks, to please his humorous eye;  
Not on the part I loved, which was thy heart,  
And, as I thought, thy virtues.
- ANNABELLA O my lord!  
These words wound deeper than your sword could  
do.
- VASQUES Let me not ever take comfort, but I begin to  
weep myself, so much I pity him; why, madam, I  
knew when his rage was over-past, what it would  
come to.
- SORANZO Forgive me, Annabella. Though thy youth  
Hath tempted thee above thy strength to folly, 130  
Yet will not I forget what I should be,  
And what I am, a husband; in that name  
Is hid divinity; if I do find  
That thou wilt yet be true, here I remit  
All former faults, and take thee to my bosom.
- VASQUES By my troth, and that's a point of noble charity.
- ANNABELLA Sir, on my knees—
- SORANZO Rise up, you shall not kneel.  
Get you to your chamber, see you make no show  
Of alteration; I'll be with you straight.  
My reason tells me now that 'tis as common 150  
To err in frailty as to be a woman.  
Go to your chamber. *Exit ANNABELLA*
- VASQUES So, this was somewhat to the matter; what do  
you think of your heaven of happiness now, sir?
- SORANZO I carry hell about me; all my blood  
Is fired in swift revenge.
- VASQUES That may be, but know you how, or on  
whom? Alas, to marry a great woman, being made  
great in the stock to your hand, is a usual sport in  
these days; but to know what ferret it was that  
haunted your cony-berry, there's the cunning. 161
- SORANZO I'll make her tell herself, or—
- VASQUES Or what? You must not do so. Let me yet  
persuade your sufferance a little while; go to her, use  
her mildly, win her if it be possible to a voluntary, to
- a weeping tune; for the rest, if all hit, I will not miss  
my mark. Pray, sir, go in; the next news I tell you  
shall be wonders.
- 130 SORANZO Delay in vengeance gives a heavier blow. 169  
*Exit*
- VASQUES Ah, sirrah, here's work for the nonce. I had a  
suspicion of a bad matter in my head a pretty while  
ago; but after my madam's scurvy looks here at home,  
her waspish perverseness and loud fault-finding, then  
I remembered the proverb, that where hens crow and  
cocks hold their peace there are sorry houses. 'Sfoot,  
if the lower parts of a she-tailor's cunning can cover  
such a swelling in the stomach, I'll never blame a  
false stitch in a shoe whiles I live again. Up and up so  
quick? And so quickly too? 'Twere a fine policy to  
learn by whom; this must be known; and I have  
thought on't—(*Enter PUTANA*) Here's the way, or  
none—what, crying, old mistress! Alas, alas, I cannot  
blame 'ee, we have a lord, Heaven help us, is so mad  
as the devil himself, the more shame for him. 184
- PUTANA O Vasques, that ever I was born to see this  
day. Doth he use thee so too, sometimes, Vasques?
- VASQUES Me? Why, he makes a dog of me. But if some  
were of my mind, I know what we would do; as sure  
as I am an honest man, he will go near to kill my lady  
with unkindness. Say she be with child, is that such a  
matter for a young woman of her years to be blamed  
for? 192
- PUTANA Alas, good heart, it is against her will full  
sore.
- VASQUES I durst be sworn, all his madness is for that  
she will not confess whose 'tis, which he will know,  
and when he doth know it, I am so well acquainted  
with his humour, that he will forget all straight.  
Well, I could wish she would in plain terms tell all,  
for that's the way indeed. 200
- PUTANA Do you think so?
- VASQUES Foh, I know't; provided that he did not win  
her to't by force. He was once in a mind that you  
could tell, and meant to have wrung it out of you, but  
I somewhat pacified him for that; yet sure you know  
a great deal.
- PUTANA Heaven forgive us all! I know a little, Vasques.
- VASQUES Why should you not? Who else should?  
Upon my conscience, she loves you dearly, and you  
would not betray her to any affliction for the world.
- PUTANA Not for all the world, by my faith and troth,  
Vasques. 212
- 
- 131 humorous: capricious  
151 in frailty: through human weakness  
158 great woman: pregnant, but also a reference to  
Annabella's social rank  
159 stock: body, but also referring to family  
to your hand: ready for you  
160 ferret: Q reads 'secret' but the line is usually amended to  
fit with Vasques' metaphor  
161 haunted your cony-berry: resided in your rabbit burrow,  
an obscene image for the female genitalia  
cunning: the hunter's skill  
165 voluntary: refers to an improvised piece of music as well  
as a spontaneous confession
- 
- 166 all hit: goes well, as in archery  
170 nonce: the present  
174-5 where hens . . . sorry houses: a contemporary  
proverb  
175-8 'Sfoot . . . whiles I live again: an indecent pun  
198 humour: obsession

VASQUES 'Twere pity of your life if you should; but in this you should both receive her present discomforts, pacify my lord, and gain yourself everlasting love and preferment.

PUTANA Dost think so, Vasques?

VASQUES Nay, I know't; sure 'twas some near and entire friend.

PUTANA 'Twas a dear friend indeed; but— 220

VASQUES But what? Fear not to name him; my life between you and danger. Faith, I think 'twas no base fellow.

PUTANA Thou wilt stand between me and harm?

VASQUES 'Ud's pity, what else? You shall be rewarded too, trust me.

PUTANA 'Twas even no worse than her own brother.

VASQUES Her brother Giovanni, I warrant 'ee!

PUTANA Even he, Vasques; as brave a gentleman as ever kissed fair lady. O, they love most perpetually. 230

VASQUES A brave gentleman indeed; why, therein I commend her choice.—Better and better!—You are sure 'twas he?

PUTANA Sure; and you shall see he will not be long from her too.

VASQUES He were to blame if he would: but may I believe thee?

PUTANA Believe me! Why, dost think I am a Turk or a Jew? No, Vasques, I have known their dealings too long to belie them now. 240

VASQUES Where are you? There within, sirs.

*Enter BANDITTI*

PUTANA How now, what are these?

VASQUES You shall know presently. Come, sirs, take me this old damnable hag, gag her instantly, and put out her eyes. Quickly, quickly!

PUTANA Vasques, Vasques! 246

VASQUES Gag her, I say. 'Sfoot, d'ee suffer her to prate? What d'ee fumble about? Let me come to her; I'll help your old gums, you toad-bellied bitch. Sirs, carry her closely into the coalhouse, and put out her eyes instantly; if she roars, slit her nose: d'ee hear, be speedy and sure. Why, this is excellent and above expectation. (*Exeunt BANDITTI with PUTANA*) Her own brother! O horrible! To what a height of liberty in damnation hath the devil trained our age. Her brother! Well, there's yet but a beginning: I must to my lord, and tutor him better in his points of vengeance; now I see how a smooth tale goes beyond

220 dear friend: a friend, but also 'expensive'

243 presently: see I.iii.16n

251 slit her nose: a common punishment for sexual transgression

254 liberty: licence

255 trained: lured

a smooth tail. But soft—What thing comes next? (*Enter GIOVANNI*) Giovanni! As I would wish; my belief is strengthened, 'tis as firm as winter and summer. 262

GIOVANNI Where's my sister?

VASQUES Troubled with a new sickness, my lord; she's somewhat ill.

GIOVANNI Took too much of the flesh, I believe.

VASQUES Troth, sir, and you, I think, have e'en hit it. But my virtuous lady—

GIOVANNI Where's she? 269

VASQUES In her chamber; please you visit her; she is alone. (*GIOVANNI gives him money*) Your liberality hath doubly made me your servant, and ever shall, ever. (*Exit GIOVANNI. Enter SORANZO*) Sir, I am made a man, I have plied my cue with cunning and success; I beseech you let's be private.

SORANZO My lady's brother's come; now he'll know all.

VASQUES Let him know't; I have made some of them fast enough.

How have you dealt with my lady? 279

SORANZO Gently, as thou hast counselled. O, my soul Runs circular in sorrow for revenge. But, Vasques, thou shalt know—

VASQUES Nay, I will know no more, for now comes your turn to know; I would not talk so openly with you. Let my young master take time enough, and go at pleasure; he is sold to death, and the devil shall not ransom him. Sir, I beseech you, your privacy.

SORANZO No conquest can gain glory of my fear.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene i

*Enter ANNABELLA above*

ANNABELLA Pleasures, farewell, and all ye thriftless minutes  
Wherein false joys have spun a weary life.  
To these my fortunes now I take my leave.  
Thou, precious Time, that swiftly rid'st in post  
Over the world, to finish up the race  
Of my last fate, here stay thy restless course,  
And bear to ages that are yet unborn  
A wretched, woeful woman's tragedy.  
My conscience now stands up against my lust

259 smooth: deceitful

266 Took too . . . the flesh: a) overeating; b) sexual indulgence

271 liberality: a) generosity; b) sexual licence

273-4 made a man: a made man

274 plied my cue: played my part

SD *Exeunt: Q has Exit*

1 thriftless: without profit

4 rid'st in post: at great speed, as with post horses

9 against: as witness against

With depositions charactered in guilt,  
*Enter FRIAR below*  
 And tells me I am lost: now I confess  
 Beauty that clothes the outside of the face  
 Is cursed if it be not clothed with grace.  
 Here like a turtle (mewed up in a cage)  
 Unmated, I converse with air and walls,  
 And descant on my vile unhappiness.  
 O Giovanni, that hast had the spoil  
 Of thine own virtues and my modest fame,  
 Would thou had'st been less subject to those stars  
 That luckless reigned at my nativity:  
 O would the scourge due to my black offence  
 Might pass from thee, that I alone might feel  
 The torment of an uncontrolled flame.

FRIAR (*Aside*) What's this I hear?

ANNABELLA That man, that blessed friar,  
 Who joined in ceremonial knot my hand  
 To him whose wife I now am, told me oft  
 I trod the path to death, and showed me how.  
 But they who sleep in lethargies of lust  
 Hug their confusion, making Heaven unjust,  
 And so did I.

FRIAR (*Aside*) Here's music to the soul. 30  
 ANNABELLA Forgive me, my good genius, and this once  
 Be helpful to my ends. Let some good man  
 Pass this way, to whose trust I may commit  
 This paper double-lined with tears and blood:  
 Which being granted, here I sadly vow  
 Repentance, and a leaving of that life  
 I long have died in.

FRIAR Lady, Heaven hath heard you,  
 And hath by providence ordained that I  
 Should be his minister for your behoof.

ANNABELLA Ha, what are you?

FRIAR Your brother's friend, the friar;  
 Glad in my soul that I have lived to hear 41  
 This free confession 'twixt your peace and you.  
 What would you, or to whom? Fear not to speak.

ANNABELLA Is Heaven so bountiful? Then I have found  
 More favour than I hoped. Here, holy man—  
*Throws a letter*

10 depositions charactered in guilt: a pun involving the idea  
 of a legal document (lettered in gold) and Annabella's  
 guilt

14 turtle: turtle-dove

mewed up: imprisoned

15 Unmated: without its mate

16 descant: sing

17 spoil: booty, but also despoliation

31 good genius: see II.ii.160n

35 sadly: seriously

37 died: in the sense of the spirit

39 behoof: advantage

10 Commend me to my brother; give him that,  
 That letter; bid him read it and repent.  
 Tell him that I (imprisoned in my chamber,  
 Barred of all company, even of my guardian,  
 Who gives me cause of much suspect) have time 50  
 To blush at what hath passed; bid him be wise,  
 And not believe the friendship of my lord.  
 I fear much more than I can speak: good father,  
 The place is dangerous, and spies are busy;  
 I must break off—you'll do't?

FRIAR Be sure I will;  
 And fly with speed—my blessing ever rest  
 20 With thee, my daughter; live, to die more blessed.

*Exit FRIAR*

ANNABELLA Thanks to the Heavens, who have  
 prolonged my breath  
 To this good use: now I can welcome death.

*Exit*

## Act V, scene ii

*Enter SORANZO and VASQUES*

VASQUES Am I to be believed now? First marry a  
 strumpet that cast herself away upon you but to laugh  
 at your horns, to feast on your disgrace, riot in your  
 vexations, cuckold you in your bride-bed, waste your  
 estate upon panders and bawds!

SORANZO No more, I say, no more.

VASQUES A cuckold is a goodly tame beast, my lord.

SORANZO I am resolved; urge not another word.

My thoughts are great, and all as resolute  
 As thunder; in mean time I'll cause our lady 10  
 To deck herself in all her bridal robes,  
 Kiss her, and fold her gently in my arms.  
 Begone—yet hear you, are the banditti ready  
 To wait in ambush?

VASQUES Good sir, trouble not yourself about other  
 business than your own resolution; remember that  
 time lost cannot be recalled.

SORANZO With all the cunning words thou canst, invite  
 The states of Parma to my birthday's feast;  
 Haste to my brother-rival and his father, 20  
 Entreat them gently, bid them not to fail.  
 Be speedy, and return.

VASQUES Let not your pity betray you till my coming  
 back; think upon incest and cuckoldry.

SORANZO Revenge is all the ambition I aspire:  
 To that I'll climb or fall; my blood's on fire.

*Exeunt*

50 suspect: suspicion

3 horns: the traditional sign of the deceived husband  
 riot: revel

19 states: nobles

**Act V, scene iii***Enter GIOVANNI*

GIOVANNI Busy opinion is an idle fool,  
That, as a school-rod keeps a child in awe,  
Frights the unexperienced temper of the mind:  
So did it me; who, ere my precious sister  
Was married, thought all taste of love would die  
In such a contract; but I find no change  
Of pleasure in this formal law of sports.  
She is still one to me, and every kiss  
As sweet and as delicious as the first  
I reaped, when yet the privilege of youth  
Entitled her a virgin. O the glory  
Of two united hearts like hers and mine!  
Let poring book-men dream of other worlds,  
My world, and all of happiness, is here,  
And I'd not change it for the best to come:  
A life of pleasure is Elysium.

*Enter FRIAR*

Father, you enter on the jubilee  
Of my retired delights; now I can tell you,  
The hell you oft have prompted is nought else  
But slavish and fond superstitious fear;  
And I could prove it too—

FRIAR Thy blindness slays thee.  
Look there, 'tis writ to thee. *Gives the letter*

GIOVANNI From whom?

FRIAR Unrip the seals and see;  
The blood's yet seething hot, that will anon  
Be frozen harder than congealèd coral.  
Why d'ee change colour, son?

GIOVANNI Fore Heaven, you make  
Some petty devil factor 'twixt my love  
And your religion-masked sorceries.  
Where had you this?

FRIAR Thy conscience, youth, is seared, 30  
Else thou wouldst stoop to warning.

GIOVANNI 'Tis her hand,  
I know't; and 'tis all written in her blood.  
She writes I know not what. Death? I'll not fear

An armèd thunderbolt aimed at my heart.  
She writes we are discovered—pox on dreams  
Of low faint-hearted cowardice! Discovered?  
The devil we are; which way is't possible?  
Are we grown traitors to our own delights?  
Confusion take such dotage, 'tis but forged;  
This is your peevish chattering, weak old man. 40

*Enter VASQUES*

Now, sir, what news bring you?  
VASQUES My lord, according to his yearly custom  
keeping this day a feast in honour of his birthday, by  
me invites you thither. Your worthy father, with the  
Pope's reverend nuncio, and other magnificoes of  
Parma, have promised their presence; will't please  
you to be of the number?

GIOVANNI Yes, tell him I dare come.

VASQUES 'Dare come'?

GIOVANNI So I said; and tell him more, I will come. 50

VASQUES These words are strange to me.

GIOVANNI Say I will come.

VASQUES You will not miss?

GIOVANNI Yet more? I'll come! Sir, are you answered?

VASQUES So I'll say.— My service to you.

*Exit VASQUES*

FRIAR You will not go, I trust.

GIOVANNI Not go? For what?

FRIAR O, do not go. This feast, I'll gage my life,  
Is but a plot to train you to your ruin.  
Be ruled, you sha' not go.

GIOVANNI Not go? Stood Death  
Threatening his armies of confounding plagues, 60  
With hosts of dangers hot as blazing stars,  
I would be there. Not go? Yes, and resolve  
To strike as deep in slaughter as they all.  
For I will go.

FRIAR Go where thou wilt; I see  
The wildness of thy fate draws to an end,  
To a bad fearful end. I must not stay  
To know thy fall; back to Bononia I  
With speed will haste, and shun this coming blow.  
Parma, farewell; would I had never known thee,  
Or aught of thine. Well, young man, since no prayer  
Can make thee safe, I leave thee to despair. 71

*Exit FRIAR*

1 Busy opinion: commonly held views

7 formal law of sports: legal sanctions against sexual activity

8 one: joined

16 Elysium: the paradise of the classical world

17 jubilee: a time of celebration

18 retired: hidden

19 prompted: put forward as part of an argument

20 fond: foolish

28 factor: a legal agent or intermediary

30 seared: dried up

31 stoop: give in, yield

34 armèd: ready for release

SD Vasques's entrance is after l. 41 in Q

45 nuncio: see II.iii.31n  
magnificoes: see I.ii.129n

53 miss: fail

57 gage: wager, bet, pledge

58 train: lure

60 confounding: destroying

61 blazing stars: comets taken as signs of disaster and apocalypse

GIOVANNI Despair, or tortures of a thousand hells,  
 All's one to me; I have set up my rest.  
 Now, now, work serious thoughts on baneful plots,  
 Be all a man, my soul; let not the curse  
 Of old prescription rend from me the gall  
 Of courage, which enrols a glorious death.  
 If I must totter like a well-grown oak,  
 Some under-shrubs shall in my weighty fall  
 Be crushed to splints: with me they all shall perish. 80

*Exit*

## Act V, scene iv

*Enter* SORANZO, VASQUES, and BANDITTI

SORANZO You will not fail, or shrink in the attempt?

VASQUES I will undertake for their parts. Be sure, my  
 masters, to be bloody enough, and as unmerciful as if  
 you were preying upon a rich booty on the very  
 mountains of Liguria; for your pardons, trust to my  
 lord, but for reward you shall trust none but your  
 own pockets.

BANDITTI OMNES We'll make a murder.

SORANZO Here's gold, here's more; want nothing; what  
 you do

Is noble, and an act of brave revenge. 10  
 I'll make ye rich banditti, and all free.

OMNES Liberty, liberty!

VASQUES Hold, take every man a vizard; when ye are  
 withdrawn, keep as much silence as you can possibly.  
 You know the watchword; till which be spoken, move  
 not, but when you hear that, rush in like a stormy  
 flood; I need not instruct ye in your own profession.

OMNES No, no, no.

VASQUES In, then; your ends are profit and  
 preferment.—Away! 20

*Exeunt* BANDITTI

73 set up my rest: a metaphor deriving from *Primer*, a contemporary card-game. Players who 'set their rest' have decided to play their hand. Here Giovanni means that he plans to risk all on the decisions he has made

75-6 the curse . . . prescription: the biblical curse on incest: 'And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness; it is a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people; he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity' (Leviticus 20.17); 'Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother and all the people shall say, Amen' (Deuteronomy 27.22)

80 splints: splinters

2 undertake: give an assurance

5 Liguria: the mountain region between Parma and the west coast of Italy

11 free: from the threat of the law

13 vizard: mask

SORANZO The guests will all come, Vasques?

VASQUES Yes, sir. And now let me a little edge your  
 resolution. You see nothing is unready to this great  
 work, but a great mind in you: call to your  
 remembrance your disgraces, your loss of honour,  
 Hippolita's blood, and arm your courage in your own  
 wrongs; so shall you best right those wrongs in  
 vengeance, which you may truly call your own.

SORANZO 'Tis well; the less I speak, the more I burn,  
 And blood shall quench that flame. 30

VASQUES Now you begin to turn Italian. This beside—  
 when my young incest-monger comes, he will be  
 sharp set on his old bit: give him time enough, let  
 him have your chamber and bed at liberty; let my hot  
 hare have law ere he be hunted to his death, that if it  
 be possible, he may post to hell in the very act of his  
 damnation.

*Enter* GIOVANNI

SORANZO It shall be so; and see, as we would wish,  
 He comes himself first. Welcome, my much-loved  
 brother,  
 Now I perceive you honour me; y'are welcome. 40  
 But where's my father?

GIOVANNI With the other states,  
 Attending on the nuncio of the Pope,  
 To wait upon him hither. How's my sister?

SORANZO Like a good housewife, scarcely ready yet;  
 Y'are best walk to her chamber.

GIOVANNI If you will.

SORANZO I must expect my honourable friends;  
 Good brother, get her forth.

GIOVANNI You are busy, sir. *Exit* GIOVANNI  
 VASQUES Even as the great devil himself would have it;  
 let him go and glut himself in his own destruction.

*Flourish. Enter* CARDINAL, FLORIO, DONADO,  
 RICHARDETTO, and ATTENDANTS

SORANZO Most reverend lord, this grace hath made me  
 proud, 50  
 That you vouchsafe my house; I ever rest  
 Your humble servant for this noble favour.

22 edge: sharpen

31 turn Italian: in the understanding of a seventeenth-century English audience, to become Italian was to become expert in the art of revenge; see Introduction  
 33 sharp set on his old bit: hungry for his old food, in the sense of sexual appetite

34-5 hot hare: hares were seen as excessively lustful creatures  
 law: the advantage or 'start' given to a hare before the chase begins

36-7 he may . . . his damnation: refers to the notion that if Giovanni dies in the very act of sinning his soul will go straight to hell

51 vouchsafe: deign to visit



CARDINAL You are our friend, my lord; his holiness  
Shall understand how zealously you honour  
Saint Peter's vicar in his substitute:  
Our special love to you.

SORANZO Signors, to you  
My welcome, and my ever best of thanks  
For this so memorable courtesy.  
Pleaseth your grace to walk near?

CARDINAL My lord, we come  
To celebrate your feast with civil mirth, 60  
As ancient custom teacheth: we will go.

SORANZO Attend his grace there!—Signors, keep your  
way.

*Exeunt*

## Act V, scene v

*Enter GIOVANNI and ANNABELLA lying on a bed*

GIOVANNI What, changed so soon? Hath your new  
sprightly lord  
Found out a trick in night-games more than we  
Could know in our simplicity? Ha! Is't so?  
Or does the fit come on you, to prove treacherous  
To your past vows and oaths?

ANNABELLA Why should you jest  
At my calamity, without all sense  
Of the approaching dangers you are in?

GIOVANNI What danger's half so great as thy revolt?  
Thou art a faithless sister, else thou know'st  
Malice, or any treachery beside, IO  
Would stoop to my bent brows; why, I hold fate  
Clasped in my fist, and could command the course  
Of time's eternal motion, hadst thou been  
One thought more steady than an ebbing sea.  
And what? You'll now be honest, that's resolved?

ANNABELLA Brother, dear brother, know what I have  
been,  
And know that now there's but a dining-time  
'Twixt us and our confusion: let's not waste  
These precious hours in vain and useless speech.

55 Saint Peter's vicar: the pope

62 keep: continue on

SD *lying on a bed*: the bed may have been revealed to the audience by drawing back a curtain to show it on the inner stage, or it may have been pushed on to the main playing area

4 fit: caprice

11 stoop: yield

11–12 I hold . . . my fist: a comparison is often made between this phrase and that of the protagonist in Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, Part 1, 369–70:

I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,

And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about . . .

17 dining-time: the period of the midday meal, corrected from 'dying' in Q

Alas, these gay attires were not put on 20  
But to some end; this sudden solemn feast  
Was not ordained to riot in expense;  
I, that have now been chambered here alone,  
Barred of my guardian, or of any else,  
Am not for nothing at an instant freed  
To fresh access. Be not deceived, my brother,  
This banquet is an harbinger of death  
To you and me; resolve yourself it is,  
And be prepared to welcome it.

GIOVANNI Well, then;  
The schoolmen teach that all this globe of earth 30  
Shall be consumed to ashes in a minute.

ANNABELLA So I have read too.

GIOVANNI But 'twere somewhat strange  
To see the waters burn; could I believe  
This might be true, I could believe as well  
There might be hell or Heaven.

ANNABELLA That's most certain.

GIOVANNI A dream, a dream! Else in this other world  
We should know one another.

ANNABELLA So we shall.

GIOVANNI Have you heard so?

ANNABELLA For certain.

GIOVANNI But d'ee think

That I shall see you there?—You look on me?  
May we kiss one another, prate or laugh, 40  
Or do as we do here?

ANNABELLA I know not that.

IO But good, for the present, what d'ee mean  
To free yourself from danger? Some way think  
How to escape; I'm sure the guests are come.

GIOVANNI Look up, look here; what see you in my  
face?

ANNABELLA Distraction and a troubled countenance.

GIOVANNI Death, and a swift repining wrath—yet look,  
What see you in mine eyes?

ANNABELLA Methinks you weep.

GIOVANNI I do indeed; these are the funeral tears  
Shed on your grave; these furrowed up my cheeks 50  
When first I loved and knew not how to woo.

Fair Annabella, should I here repeat  
The story of my life, we might lose time.  
Be record all the spirits of the air  
And all things else that are, that day and night,  
Early and late, the tribute which my heart  
Hath paid to Annabella's sacred love  
Hath been these tears, which are her mourners now.  
Never till now did Nature do her best

30 schoolmen: medieval theologians

40 prate: casual talk or gossip

42 good: good brother

47 repining: discontented

51 woo: corrected from Q which reads 'woe'

To show a matchless beauty to the world,  
 Which in an instant, ere it scarce was seen,  
 The jealous Destinies required again.  
 Pray, Annabella, pray; since we must part,  
 Go thou, white in thy soul, to fill a throne  
 Of innocence and sanctity in Heaven.  
 Pray, pray, my sister.

ANNABELLA Then I see your drift.  
 Ye blessed angels, guard me.

GIOVANNI So say I.  
 Kiss me. If ever after-times should hear  
 Of our fast-knit affections, though perhaps  
 The laws of conscience and of civil use  
 May justly blame us, yet when they but know  
 Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigour  
 Which would in other incests be abhorred.  
 Give me your hand; how sweetly life doth run  
 In these well-coloured veins. How constantly  
 These palms do promise health. But I could chide  
 With Nature for this cunning flattery.  
 Kiss me again—forgive me.

ANNABELLA With my heart.

GIOVANNI Farewell.

ANNABELLA Will you be gone?

GIOVANNI Be dark, bright sun,  
 And make this midday night, that thy gilt rays 80  
 May not behold a deed will turn their splendour  
 More sooty than the poets feign their Styx.  
 One other kiss, my sister.

ANNABELLA What means this?

GIOVANNI To save thy fame, and kill thee in a kiss.  
*Stabs her*

Thus die, and die by me, and by my hand.  
 Revenge is mine; honour doth love command.

ANNABELLA O brother, by your hand?

GIOVANNI When thou art dead  
 I'll give my reasons for't; for to dispute  
 With thy (even in thy death) most lovely beauty,  
 Would make me stagger to perform this act, 90  
 Which I most glory in.

ANNABELLA Forgive him, Heaven, and me my sins;  
 farewell.

Brother unkind, unkind!—Mercy, great Heaven—  
 O!—O! *Dies*

GIOVANNI She's dead, alas, good soul. The hapless fruit  
 That in her womb received its life from me  
 Hath had from me a cradle and a grave.  
 I must not dally. This sad marriage-bed,

70 civil use: civilised behaviour

72 rigour: violence

82 More sooty . . . their Styx: the classical underworld was reached across the black waters of the river Styx

84 fame: good name, reputation

93 unkind: cruel and unnatural

94 hapless: luckless

60 In all her best, bore her alive and dead.  
 Soranzo, thou hast missed thy aim in this;  
 I have prevented now thy reaching plots, 100  
 And killed a love, for whose each drop of blood  
 I would have pawned my heart. Fair Annabella,  
 How over-glorious art thou in thy wounds,  
 Triumphant over infamy and hate!  
 Shrink not, courageous hand, stand up, my heart,  
 And boldly act my last and greater part.

*Exit with the body*70 **Act V, scene vi**

*A Banquet. Enter CARDINAL, FLORIO, DONADO, SORANZO, RICHARDETTO, VASQUES, and ATTENDANTS; they take their places*

VASQUES Remember, sir, what you have to do; be wise and resolute.

SORANZO Enough; my heart is fixed.—Pleaseth your grace

To taste these coarse confections; though the use Of such set entertainments more consists

In custom than in cause, yet, reverend sir,

I am still made your servant by your presence.

CARDINAL And we your friend.

SORANZO But where's my brother Giovanni?

*Enter GIOVANNI with a heart upon his dagger*

GIOVANNI Here, here, Soranzo; trimmed in reeking blood, 10

That triumphs over death; proud in the spoil Of love and vengeance! Fate or all the powers

That guide the motions of immortal souls

Could not prevent me.

CARDINAL What means this?

FLORIO Son Giovanni!

SORANZO Shall I be forestalled?

GIOVANNI Be not amazed; if your misgiving hearts

Shrink at an idle sight, what bloodless fear

Of coward passion would have seized your senses, 20

Had you beheld the rape of life and beauty

Which I have acted? My sister, O my sister.

FLORIO Ha! What of her?

GIOVANNI The glory of my deed

Darkened the midday sun, made noon as night.

You came to feast, my lords, with dainty fare;

I came to feast too, but I digged for food

In a much richer mine than gold or stone

100 prevented: forestalled

reaching: cunning

4 coarse confections: modest dishes

10 trimmed: adorned

11 spoil: plunder

19 idle sight: a sight of little consequence

Of any value balanced; 'tis a heart,  
 A heart, my lords, in which is mine entombed:  
 Look well upon't; d'ee know't? 30  
 VASQUES What strange riddle's this?  
 GIOVANNI 'Tis Annabella's heart, 'tis; why d'ee startle?  
 I vow 'tis hers: this dagger's point ploughed up  
 Her fruitful womb, and left to me the fame  
 Of a most glorious executioner.  
 FLORIO Why, madman, art thyself?  
 GIOVANNI Yes, father; and that times to come may  
 know  
 How as my fate I honoured my revenge,  
 List, father, to your ears I will yield up  
 How much I have deserved to be your son. 40  
 FLORIO What is't thou say'st?  
 GIOVANNI Nine moons have had their changes  
 Since I first throughly viewed and truly loved  
 Your daughter and my sister.  
 FLORIO How!—Alas  
 My lords, he's a frantic madman!  
 GIOVANNI Father, no.  
 For nine months' space in secret I enjoyed  
 Sweet Annabella's sheets; nine months I lived  
 A happy monarch of her heart and her.  
 Soranzo, thou know'st this; thy paler cheek  
 Bears the confounding print of thy disgrace,  
 For her too fruitful womb too soon bewrayed 50  
 The happy passage of our stol'n delights,  
 And made her mother to a child unborn.  
 CARDINAL Incestuous villain!  
 FLORIO O, his rage belies him.  
 GIOVANNI It does not, 'tis the oracle of truth;  
 I vow it is so.  
 SORANZO I shall burst with fury.  
 Bring the strumpet forth.  
 VASQUES I shall, sir. *Exit VASQUES*  
 GIOVANNI Do, sir.—Have you all no faith  
 To credit yet my triumphs? Here I swear  
 By all that you call sacred, by the love  
 I bore my Annabella whilst she lived. 60  
 These hands have from her bosom ripped this heart.  
*Enter VASQUES*  
 Is't true or no, sir?  
 VASQUES 'Tis most strangely true.  
 FLORIO Cursed man!—Have I lived to— *Dies*  
 CARDINAL Hold up, Florio.—  
 Monster of children, see what thou hast done,  
 Broke thy old father's heart. Is none of you

Dares venture on him?  
 GIOVANNI Let 'em.—O, my father,  
 How well his death becomes him in his griefs!  
 Why, this was done with courage; now survives  
 None of our house but I, guilt in the blood  
 Of a fair sister and a hapless father. 70  
 SORANZO Inhuman scorn of men, hast thou a thought  
 T'outlive thy murders?  
 GIOVANNI Yes, I tell thee, yes;  
 For in my fists I bear the twists of life.  
 Soranzo, see this heart, which was thy wife's;  
 Thus I exchange it royally for thine, *Stabs him*  
 And thus and thus. Now brave revenge is mine.  
 VASQUES I cannot hold any longer.—You, sir, are you  
 grown insolent in your butcheries? Have at you!  
*They fight*  
 GIOVANNI Come, I am armed to meet thee.  
 VASQUES No, will it not be yet? If this will not, another  
 shall. Not yet? I shall fit you anon.—Vengeance! 81  
*Enter BANDITTI and fight GIOVANNI*  
 GIOVANNI Welcome, come more of you whate'er you  
 be,  
 I dare your worst—  
 O, I can stand no longer! Feeble arms,  
 Have you so soon lost strength?  
 VASQUES Now you are welcome, sir!—Away, my  
 masters, all is done, shift for yourselves. Your reward  
 is your own; shift for yourselves.  
 BANDITTI Away, away! *Exeunt BANDITTI*  
 VASQUES How d'ee, my lord; see you this? How is't? 90  
 SORANZO Dead; but in death well pleased that I have  
 lived  
 To see my wrongs revenged on that black devil.  
 O Vasques, to thy bosom let me give  
 My last of breath; let not that lecher live—O! *Dies*  
 VASQUES The reward of peace and rest be with him, my  
 ever dearest lord and master.  
 GIOVANNI Whose hand gave me this wound?  
 VASQUES Mine, sir, I was your first man; have you  
 enough?  
 GIOVANNI I thank thee; thou hast done for me but  
 what 100  
 I would have else done on myself. Art sure  
 Thy lord is dead?  
 VASQUES O impudent slave! As sure as I am sure to see  
 thee die.

69 guilt: a) the adornment of the blood; b) guilty of the deed  
 73 twists of life: Giovanni refers to himself as one of the  
 Parcae, the Greek mythological figures who spun the  
 thread of each human life before cutting it to signal  
 death

81 fit you anon: deal with you shortly  
 Vengeance!: the signal previously agreed with the  
 Banditti

28 balanced: tested by weight

42 throughly: thoroughly

50 bewrayed: revealed

51 passage: course

53 rage belies him: his madness has made him lie

CARDINAL Think on thy life and end, and call for mercy.

GIOVANNI Mercy? Why, I have found it in this justice.

CARDINAL Strive yet to cry to Heaven.

GIOVANNI O, I bleed fast.

Death, thou art a guest long looked for; I embrace  
Thee and thy wounds; O, my last minute comes.  
Where'er I go, let me enjoy this grace, **110**  
Freely to view my Annabella's face. *Dies*

DONADO Strange miracle of justice!

CARDINAL Raise up the city; we shall be murdered all.

VASQUES You need not fear, you shall not; this strange  
task being ended, I have paid the duty to the son  
which I have vowed to the father.

CARDINAL Speak, wretched villain, what incarnate  
fiend

Hath led thee on to this? **118**

VASQUES Honesty, and pity of my master's wrongs; for  
know, my lord, I am by birth a Spaniard, brought  
forth my country in my youth by Lord Soranzo's  
father, whom whilst he lived I served faithfully; since  
whose death I have been to this man as I was to him.  
What I have done was duty, and I repent nothing but  
that the loss of my life had not ransomed his.

CARDINAL Say, fellow, know'st thou any yet unnamed  
Of counsel in this incest?

VASQUES Yes, an old woman, sometimes guardian to  
this murdered lady.

CARDINAL And what's become of her? **130**

VASQUES Within this room she is; whose eyes, after her  
confession, I caused to be put out, but kept alive, to  
confirm what from Giovanni's own mouth you have  
heard. Now, my lord, what I have done you may  
judge of, and let your own wisdom be a judge in your  
own reason.

CARDINAL Peace!—First this woman, chief in these  
effects:

My sentence is, that forthwith she be ta'en  
Out of the city, for example's sake,  
There to be burnt to ashes.

DONADO 'Tis most just. **140**

CARDINAL Be it your charge, Donado, see it done.

DONADO I shall.

VASQUES What for me? If death, 'tis welcome; I have  
been honest to the son as I was to the father.

CARDINAL Fellow, for thee, since what thou didst was  
done

Not for thyself, being no Italian,  
We banish thee forever, to depart

Within three days; in this we do dispense  
With grounds of reason, not of thine offence.

VASQUES 'Tis well; this conquest is mine, and I rejoice  
that a Spaniard outwent an Italian in revenge. **151**

*Exit VASQUES*

CARDINAL Take up these slaughtered bodies, see them  
buried;

And all the gold and jewels, or whatsoever,  
Confiscate by the canons of the church,  
We seize upon to the Pope's proper use.

RICHARDETTO (*reveals himself*) Your grace's pardon:  
thus long I lived disguised

To see the effect of pride and lust at once  
Brought both to shameful ends.

CARDINAL What, Richardetto whom we thought for  
dead?

DONADO Sir, was it you—

RICHARDETTO Your friend.

CARDINAL We shall have time

To talk at large of all; but never yet **161**  
Incest and murder have so strangely met.  
Of one so young, so rich in nature's store,  
Who could not say, 'tis pity she's a whore?

*Exeunt*

FINIS

*The Printer's Apology*

The general commendation deserved by the actors in  
their presentment of this tragedy may easily excuse such  
few faults as are escaped in the printing. A common  
charity may allow him the ability of spelling whom a  
secure confidence assures that he cannot ignorantly err  
in the application of sense.

127 Of counsel: involved

128 sometimes: formerly

137 this woman: some scholars have pointed to the ambiguity  
of this reference, remarking that the body referred to  
could be that of either Putana or Annabella

148–9 dispense with . . . reason: offer a dispensation in the  
light of Vasques' motives

151 Spaniard: Spaniards were considered second only to the  
Italians in the art of revenge

155 proper: personal

157 at once: together

161 at large: at length